

M. N. Roy :
**A Study of Revolution and
Reason in Indian Politics**

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PREFACE

This work—the revised version of Kurukshetra University doctoral thesis on M. N. Roy's Political Philosophy—is an attempt in the study of revolution and reason in Indian politics. From communism to humanism is a fascinating study of M. N. Roy, in whom the revolutionary process joins hand with rational process. The parallel march of revolution and reason in the evolution of Roy's political ideas, helped him to develop a scientific philosophy of Indian politics.

Roy's thesis on colonial revolution, which he submitted as supplementary to Lenin's thesis to the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, is a land-mark in Indian politics as it provided a theoretical basis for communist political strategy and tactics, and carried to still higher levels the theoretical understanding of fundamental problems of revolution in India and other former colonial countries. Roy's doctrine of imperial liquidation and de-colonisation—the culmination of his thesis on colonial revolution—adds to the existing knowledge on dynamics of British response to India's struggle for freedom, and represents Roy's major contribution towards the Marxian understanding of the form and process of transfer of power in India.

Roy makes significant contribution to Indian socialist thought by his Marxian interpretation of Indian social structure in its contemporary set-up. This study presents Roy as Bernstein of India—a revisionist—for his views of twentieth century Jacobinism—a philosophy of bourgeois democratic revolution, but which, Roy claimed, would eventually lead India to socialism. Ultimately, Roy abandoned socialism, which as maintained here, he did in entirety. Reason showed a different path to revolution.

Roy's views on reconstruction of Indian polity are no less exciting. Process of constitution-making remained a revolutionary process. Jacobinist reconstruction sounding paradoxical, drives him to propound the idea of radical democratic state for India. As he veered around humanism, Roy approached the reconstruction of Indian polity in terms of co-operative commonwealth—the running thread of revolution and reason.

Roy's treatment of Indian Polity does not remain internal; it acquires external dimensions. The romance of free intellect in Roy leads him to project the image of internationalism in Indian politics. Rejection of nationalism as an antiquated cult shows that Roy suffers from traditional hostility, he inherited from Marxism. Treatment of Indian fascism, though superb in analysis, is found exaggerated by his theory of international civil war. Roy's precept for peace makes an impressive reading, but strikes utopian for want of emphasis on the role of international organisation and world law.

Roy ceased to be Marxist but he continued to remain materialist. His exposition of Indian materialism serves to provide a needed stimulus for fresh thinking on the subject. Many Westerners have carried on a tradition of praising Indian thought for the very beliefs that were rapidly finding disfavour among intellectuals of a naturalistic and scientific bent in the West. This has led to unfortunate results, not the least of which was to make the Indian thought suspect of considerably more mysticism and irrationalism than it actually contained. Roy's re-statement of Indian materialism puts Indian thought in proper perspectives.

Materialism, as re-stated by Roy, constitutes the basis of Radical Humanism, propounded by him in the background of Indian conditions. As an answer to the forces of regeneration, Roy presents it as the philosophy of 20th Century Indian Renaissance. The emphasis is on philosophical revolution, which must precede socio-economic revolution in India. Thus, regeneration in India will take place under the banner of a philosophy, in which, reason will function as arbiter in all disputes in the field of knowledge and values. Roy links up social and political practice with a scientific metaphysics and ethics.

Pilgrimage from communism to humanism represents liberal metamorphosis of Roy. This transformation is not without an element of tragedy. It may be ascribed to the independence of intellect, Roy so much loved, and to the failure and frustration, he encountered in his chequered political career. The tragedy of Roy is the tragedy of liberalism in Indian politics in spite of its correct perception of the dependence of a political order on appropriate values. By making reason ingredient to revolution, Roy shows right path at a time when India is engaged in the gigantic task of economic reconstruction. The politics of socia-

lism and the politics of amendments, though intended to bring about social change, may open the floodgates of totalitarianism if miscarried and subverted to party-ends. Liberal metamorphosis of Roy strikes a sagacious note against these danger spots in Indian politics.

I express my sincere gratitude to Mr Sushil Mukherjea, who took keen interest in the publication of this work, and gave encouragement in unbounded measure. Mr Mukherjea is a publisher with a difference. A freedom fighter and a former trade union leader, Mr Mukherjea is a true humanist, dedicated and devoted in building a fraternity of authors around the Minerva Associates.

My thanks are due to Dr P. C. Muhar, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Bihar University, under whom this research was conducted, and whose kind guidance facilitated the completion of this study. I record my deep gratitude to Prof. R. L. Nigam, Secretary, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehra Dun, for providing research facilities of consulting rare material on Roy in the library of Institute, and for granting permission to look into the unpublished correspondence of M. N. Roy, preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives of the Institute. My thanks are due to Subhagya, Deepak and Chander Shekhar, who rendered valuable help in scrutinising the manuscript in its typescript form.

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CHAPTER I

THESIS ON COLONIAL REVOLUTION

M. N. Roy shot into prominence as a leftist thinker for his thesis on colonial revolution, which he submitted at the Second Congress of the Communist International held in 1920 at Moscow. If Russia was the citadel of world revolution, India could become the seat of revolution in Asia. Roy's colonial thesis represents his transition from nationalism to socialism. In 1915, when Roy left India as Narendranath Bhattacharya (his original name) in search of arms for national liberation, he was an orthodox nationalist. It was in the United States that he became Manabendra Nath Roy, a name that stuck till the end. In U.S.A., he developed friendship with Lala Lajpat Rai—leader of extremists in Indian politics. Lajpat Rai's answer to a question at a socialist meeting, "how did the nationalists propose to end the poverty of the Indian masses?"¹ was a great disappointment for Roy. He was taken aback by Lalaji's retort: "It does make a great difference whether one is kicked by his brother or by a foreign robber."² The new light of Marxism flashed through his mind: nationalism came to be linked with socialism. In Mexico, Roy came across socialist groups, and was initiated into dialectical materialism by Michael Borodin, the Comintern agent. Roy had the distinction of founding the Communist Party of Mexico, and in November, 1919, he left for Russia at the invitation of Lenin. He stopped in Berlin to contact August Thalheimer and Heinrich Brandler, outstanding communist scholars, who rendered great intellectual service to Roy.

COLONIAL REVOLUTION AND THE SECOND CONGRESS

A convert to Marxism, Roy rose rapidly within the Comintern to become the most prominent exponent of communism in Asia. Roy's Colonial thesis was of "enormous importance for

1. M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1964, p. 28.
2. *Ibid.*

the Indian communists,"³ for it carried to still higher levels the theoretical understanding of fundamental communist policy for the underdeveloped as contrasted with the industrialised parts of the world. Roy contested the validity of Lenin's thesis that "the communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries."⁴ He maintained that in addition to a bourgeois-democratic movement, a proletarian revolutionary upsurge was developing among workers, who were being exploited in the process of rapid industrialisation. This trend was accelerated by the great mass of landless peasantry, struggling against feudal remnants. Roy, therefore, urged the Comintern to help develop class-consciousness of the working masses in the colonies, though he conceded that "in order to overthrow foreign capitalism, which is the first step toward a revolution in the colonies, it would be profitable to make use of co-operation of the bourgeois national-revolutionary elements."⁵ The colonial communist movement should devote itself to the task of organising the truly revolutionary masses—the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie, and lead them to the revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics.

Roy did not deny Lenin's contention that revolution in a colonial country would not at first be a socialist revolution. But he was opposed to bourgeois leadership as he firmly believed that "if from the outset the leadership is in the hands of a communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses will be on the right road toward their goal, and they will gradually achieve revolutionary experience."⁶ Roy's thesis condemned the Comintern for neglecting the colonial question. He maintained that

3. V. V. Balabushevich and A. M. Dyakov (editors), *A Contemporary History of India*. Academy of Sciences of U.S.S.R. New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1964, p. 155.

4. V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," *Selected Works*, Vol. X., New York: International Publishers, 1938, p. 236.

5. "Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Questions presented to the Second Congress of the Communist International by M. N. Roy." in X. J. Eudin and Robert C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1929 : A Documentary Survey*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957, p. 66.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

the world capitalism was drawing its main source of strength from the colonies. The colonial possessions delayed the European revolution also. "Super-profits gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism, and so long as the latter is not deprived of this source of superprofit, it will not be easy for the European working class to overthrow the capitalist order."⁷ Roy concluded his thesis with the observation that the revolutionary movement in Europe was absolutely dependent on the course of revolution in India and other Asian countries. He urged the Comintern to "accept as fundamental thesis that the destiny of world communism depends on the triumph of communism in the East."⁸ Though impressed by Roy's thesis, Lenin succeeded in persuading him to modify it. According to Lenin, the Communist International must be ready to establish temporary relationships and even alliances with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies. It must not, however, amalgamate with it. In contrast, while Roy agreed that it would be profitable to make use of the co-operation of the bourgeois national-revolutionary elements, he insisted that the Comintern and its constituent parties must struggle against any bourgeois control over the workers and peasants, and must make every effort to develop the class-consciousness of the working masses. The difference between the two viewpoints was only a matter of emphasis, but it was sufficient to confuse the issue in communist minds and to hamper the Comintern in seeking to exploit the revolution in India and other Asian countries.

Roy's thesis propounded the theory of two distinct movements which grew further apart from each other each day. One is the bourgeois democratic movement with a programme of political independence under the bourgeois order. The other is the mass struggle of the poor and ignorant peasants for their liberation from the various forms of exploitation. In order to overthrow foreign capitalism, he argued, it would be profitable to make use of the cooperation of the bourgeois nationalist

7. "Theses on the National and Colonial Question—Supplementary Theses", in *Theses and Statute of the Third (Communist) International*, Moscow: Publishing Office of the Communist International, 1920, pp. 72-73.

8. "The Situation in India—Report by Comrade Roy," Petrograd : *Pravda* (July 29, 1920)

elements—but only in the initial stages and with circumspection. The foremost task was to form communist parties in the dependent areas to organise peasant and workers and lead them to revolution.

Lenin took strong exception to parts of Roy's thesis. Drawing on experience, he reminded that the Russian Bolsheviks had supported liberal liberation movements against Tsarism. Similarly, the Indian communists were in duty bound to support bourgeois liberation movements without in any sense merging with them. Roy, moreover, had gone too far in declaring that the destiny of revolutionary forces in the West would depend decisively upon the strength of the mass revolutionary movements in Asia. After considerable debate the Second Congress sought to resolve the argument by approving both the theses. While collaborating with middle-class nationalists in India and semi-colonies, communist leaders were expected to make every effort to arouse and organise the working masses, and to penetrate and gain leadership over existing revolutionary movements.

ROY'S THESIS AND MARXISM-LENINISM

The question as to what attitude the working class of a colonial or semi-colonial country should take towards a national-liberation movement led by the national bourgeoisie cannot be answered for a Marxist by simple reference to the works of Marx. Marx wrote before the emergence of industrial proletariat in the colonial countries, so the question hardly arose for him. The First International ignored it; the Second International remained for a long time equally apathetic. When the Bolshevik revolution occurred in the fourth year of the first World War, the colonial question had inflammable qualities which communist revolutionaries could hardly afford to ignore. Lenin attempted to deal with the problem, and his treatment of the subject has come to be known as Marxism-Leninism.

To understand Roy's position, it is necessary to analyse his thesis in the context of Marxism-Leninism. Since Lenin believed that general principles were relative to time and place, he discussed Marx's ideas on nationalism as of three distinct epochs, all of them modern. The first epoch, 1789-1871, represents the ascending line of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois-democratic move-

ments in general and of bourgeois-national movements in particular—an epoch of the rapid breakdown of obsolete feudal absolutist institutions. The second epoch, 1871-1914, is the epoch of full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie, and of its transformation from a progressive class to a reactionary class under the leadership of finance capital. The third epoch of imperialism began only in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War, which he expected to usher in a period of convulsions, ending in the overthrow of capitalism in one country after another.

Lenin thought that in the first of the epochs, nationalism was a progressive force as it is wherever the rising capitalist class seeks to throw off the chains of feudalism, it then makes use of the form of the national state. He assumed that all nations would go through the same development, and that India and China would follow the national road, and be organised into national states. In the epoch that had ended in 1871, it was perfectly natural that the elements of modern democracy, with Marx as their representative, should have been guided by the principle of supporting the progressive bourgeoisie against feudalism. As far as Lenin's theory of nationalism was concerned, there was no reason why nationalism could not be a progressive force in any part of the world where socio-economic development had reached the stage then exemplified by India and China.

When the bourgeoisie is a progressive class, building the nation, destroying feudalism, and either fighting off imperialism or trying to get rid of it, Lenin unquestionably felt that it deserves support both from the working masses in the country in question and from those in the imperialist country. When, however, the resistance to imperialism is offered by a reactionary class, the case is not so simple. The espousal of the principle of self-determination creates a presumption in favour of national rebellion. But rebellions against imperialism must be truly national to become entitled for the support. In the words of Lenin: "It is not our duty to support every struggle against imperialism. We will not support the struggle of the reactionary classes against imperialism; we will not support an uprising of the reactionary classes against imperialism and capitalism."⁹

9. V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Econo-

However, in the same article, it develops that "We cannot withhold support from any serious popular struggle against national oppression."¹⁰ The implication is clear that even if reactionary classes initiated an anti-imperialist struggle in a colonial, or semi-colonial country, from the time that considerable masses of the people supported it, the duty of the workers in both the underdeveloped country and the imperialist country would be to support the struggle too. One of the strongest arguments in favour of colonial wars of liberation, and in favour of anti-imperialist movement generally, has been that such movements mean attacking capitalism at its weakest point. It may be easier to appreciate Lenin's opposition to Roy's thesis, and his support for the bourgeois-national liberation movement in India.

To Lenin, imperialism consists of the classical features of capitalism transferred on an international level. Marx's predictions had not been realised because his thought had been confined to the boundaries of Europe. In Lenin's opinion, all the old contradictions will reappear as soon as the entire world becomes a single capitalist-imperialist society. Lenin's theory turns the class-struggle within individual nations into a conflict between 'have' and 'have not' nations. All social elements of the backward nations become the proletariat. A consciousness of poverty emerges which gradually evolves into indignation over the havoc wrought by overproduction in the more developed countries. Lenin seems to suggest that radical political ideas develop in inverse proportion and that revolution is not bred in highly developed nations but in underdeveloped countries—a view, struck in Roy's thesis. Lenin appears to accept the full implications of the dialectics of backwardness when he concedes that "it is easier for the movement to start in the countries that are not among those exploiting countries which have opportunities for easy plunder and are able to bribe the upper section of their workers."¹¹ Yet, he refused to face its logical implication

mism?" *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, New York: International Publishers, 1942, p. 250.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

11. V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the Third Congress of Soviets," *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964, pp. 471-472.

that the communist revolution must occur in Asia prior to Europe. This is what Roy was demanding in his thesis. Lenin's reluctance to accept Roy's contention means that imperialism represented the extension on international plane of only some, not all, of the contradictions of capitalism. Fatal contradictions remained within the imperialist nations. He still anticipated a European revolution in the near future.

Lenin's support of bourgeois nationalism gives the appearance of combining socialism with nationalism. The implications of pure dialectic of backwardness are modified by the doctrine of combined development—the phenomena, which indicates the co-existence of non-contemporaneous societies. "Social revolution can occur only in an entire epoch in which the civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries is joined with the whole number of revolutionary democratic and national liberation movements in the backward and oppressed nations."¹² This happens because capitalism does not develop evenly, and because the actual situation proves that side by side with the highly developed capitalist nations, there exist a number of nations which are little advanced or not advanced at all. Consequently, such countries experience two class-wars.

On scrutiny, it may be found that the doctrine of combined development lends support to Roy's thesis. It suggests that no formula for the communist revolution is applicable to all countries at all times. The support of bourgeois nationalism, although it might have been useful in the nineteenth century Europe, is not necessarily valid for twentieth century colonial countries. Roy's logic carried conviction with Lenin, who had to modify paragraph II of his thesis, conceding that the form of support to be given to colonial liberation movements was to be determined by a study of existing conditions by "the communist party of the country in question, if there is one."¹³

To appreciate Roy's position, it may be pointed out that Lenin identified the cause of world revolution with the interests

12. Alfred G. Mayer, *Leninism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 254.

13. "Theses on the National and Colonial Question adopted by the Second Comintern Congress," Jane Degras, *The Communist International, Documents*, Vol. I, 1919-1922, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 143.

of the Russian state. Support of bourgeois national movements promised to contribute to the speediest consummation of the European revolution, regardless of its effect on the course of communism in Asia. The imperial powers must be deprived of the major source of their strength, their colonial super-profit before revolution could succeed in Europe. This could best be achieved by the expedient measure of supporting all anti-imperialist movements irrespective of class affiliation. Lenin still believed that the next stage of the revolution would emerge in Europe, where the proletariat would be inspired to armed resistance by the presence of its communist neighbour. The notion of transitional period which tended to equate the Soviet requirements with the interests of world communism, added a time dimension to the theory of spark. But as the length of the transition period grew to indefinite proportions, the subordination of the interests of the proletariat of Asia to the interests of Soviet Russia—a subordination which Lenin had intended to be of transitory nature—took on a permanent cast, Roy's fears became true.

PROLETARIAT AND THE NATIONAL CLASS

The significance of Roy's thesis lies in the controversy, it raises between national and class-struggle. "In order to ensure the final success of the world revolution, the co-ordination between these two forces, the breaking down of the colonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, is imperative."¹⁴ The basis of Roy's thesis was the conviction that only through the direct support of the proletariat and peasant movement, the Comintern would be promoting the interests of the Indian masses. If the Indian revolt was not to assume the forms of a proletarian revolution, it must have at least a reliable base. Roy had this apprehension that afraid of revolution, the nationalist bourgeoisie would compromise with imperialism in return for some economic and political concessions. "The working class should be prepared to take over at that crisis the leadership of the struggle for national liberation and transform

14. "Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Questions, Presented to the Second Congress of the Communist International by M. N. Roy," Eudin and North, *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

it into a revolutionary mass movement."¹⁵ Lenin, on the other hand, considered India and other Asian countries to be just entering the phase in which the bourgeoisie is a progressive class, with which the proletariat could suitably be allied.

Lenin, indeed, was amplifying Marx. Since society is divided into classes, one or the other class exercises the dominant role in determining policy. When a class exercises its power in such a way as to develop suitably the forces of production, it justifies its claim to be considered as the national class. The implication of this argument is that when the leading or national class is following a policy which is in the national interest, the other classes should follow its lead, and should submerge their particular class interests temporarily. In colonial countries like India, Roy was not prepared to concede the role of national class to bourgeoisie, and was by no means content to leave the conduct of revolution to the bourgeoisie, even though it was then the leading class and was developing freedom struggle against imperialism. He insisted that the workers and the peasants should subject the bourgeoisie to continuous pressure, and this pressure supplied the guarantee that the Indian bourgeoisie would not place its own interests before the common cause. The bourgeoisie had been a progressive force in the immediate past, and indeed Marx thought that it would continue to be a progressive force in backward countries even after socialism had won out in Europe. It was the interest and duty of the workers to aid the bourgeoisie—although Lenin later added the qualification that where workers were strong enough, they should take the lead in this struggle. It is evident that Marx in discussing nationalism had to take account of the psychology of the several strata of society. This need follows from the proposition, enunciated so clearly and accepted in practice by Marx, that class consciousness and the sentiment of nationalism are alike facts and must be dealt with as such. The dialectic method of Marx does not deny the existence of such facts, even when they run counter to what the theorist might have predicted. At most the materialist approach can explain ideas, and it does this often in a way that would be completely impossible for historians who give to ideas

15. M. N. Roy, "Disagreement with Lenin Over the Colonial Question," M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 382.

a natural history of their own, divorced from their social context. Of course, Marxists can also propound policies and predictions which then have to vindicate themselves in practice like any others.

The difference between Roy and Lenin veered around the Indian bourgeoisie as a national class. They differed over the role of Gandhi, and the revolutionary significance of Indian nationalist movement. Lenin considered that Gandhi was the inspirer and leader of the mass movement, and, therefore, was a revolutionary. In Roy's estimation, he was a religious and cultural revivalist, and as such was "bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically."¹⁶ Roy compared Gandhi with the Russian Populists, who denounced capitalism as a western vice, and, who like Gandhi, appealed to the younger generation to return to the village to revive the 'Mirs'. Roy reminded Lenin of Plekhanov characterising them politically revolutionary, but reactionary socially. Roy presented Gandhi as the representative of Indian bourgeoisie, who, as a class were not economically and culturally different from the feudal social order. Therefore, in Roy's assesment, the nationalist movement in India was "ideologically reactionary in the sense that its triumph would not necessarily mean a bourgeois democratic revolution."¹⁷ Roy refused to accord the status of a national class to Indian bourgeoisie, and attributed ignorance of social relations to Lenin's appraisal of the Indian revolutionary situation, though theoretically Lenin's stand was sound. He appreciated Lenin's arguments that Imperialism had held back India in feudal social conditions, which hindered the development of capitalism and frustrated bourgeois ambitions. Every stage of revolution being historically determined, India must have its bourgeois revolution before it could enter the stage of the proletarian revolution. In Lenin's opinion, the Indian communists must help the colonial liberation movement under the leadership of the nationalist bourgeoisie, treating Gandhi as a revolutionary force. Despite the theoretical appreciation, Roy did not agree with Lenin that Gandhi was a vital factor in the Indian

16. M. N. Roy, "Disagreement With Lenin Over Colonial Question," M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 379.

17 *Ibid.*

nationalist movement. This was based on the mistaken notion of the numerical and ideological strength of the Indian working class. Although the nationalist movement rests for the most part on the middle classes, a revolutionary movement of the proletarian masses was blazing its own road. It was no longer confined to the narrow circle of bourgeois democratic nationalists. However, Roy conceded afterwards that Lenin's evaluation of Indian class consciousness was correct. He gradually came to realise that the Indian proletariat were not only "weak numerically" but partially as a class, for "very few are consciously inclined towards communism."¹⁸ But Roy seemed to be a prophet in predicting bourgeois-led struggle, ending in compromise with British imperialism.

In his robust faith in class consciousness of the Indian proletariat, Roy appeared to be Marx of pre-1848 era when he had over-estimated the degree to which class-consciousness could arise simultaneously as a result of objective conditions then prevailing in Europe. Thus, he felt the need of destroying those elements in the objective situation which tended to retard this development. It sought to facilitate class-consciousness by calling upon the communist parties to fight for the extension of democratic liberties. Although Marx's optimism had been tempered by the realities of 1848, he still felt confident that class-consciousness would develop spontaneously provided the objective conditions were manipulated correctly. While working for the development of bourgeois democracy in its purest form, communist parties were simultaneously to strive to weaken the bourgeois order by making ideological attacks on capitalism and encouraging revolution. In practice, the strengthening of the bourgeoisie as a step in the direction of their overthrow, would tend to contradict the Marxian programme of revolution 'from below' and 'from above'. Roy believed that the support of bourgeois nationalism, if carried to the point of co-operating with it, would be detrimental to the interests of the colonial proletariat. The Indian proletariat must take the lead in the Indian revolution, even if it was to be a bourgeois revolution in its first stage.¹⁹ In 1920,

18. M. N. Roy, *Heresies of the Twentieth Century*, Bombay, Renaissance Publishers, 1943, pp. 118-119.

19. "Theses on the National and Colonial Question adopted by the Second Comintern Congress," Jane Degras, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

Roy was young and impatient, and like Marx of pre-1848, he did not realise the need to develop class consciousness. In his restlessness to liberate Indian masses soon from all oppressive relationships, he did not share Lenin's analysis that nationalism could be a progressive force when directed against imperialism. Nor did he agree with Lenin that it was possible to maintain class antagonism within colonial area, promoting, at the same time, nationalist feelings against imperial power. Holding that promotion of nationalism would blur class lines, Roy was convinced that such a policy would result in sacrificing the interests of the Indian proletariat to the cause of European revolution. As against Lenin's thesis, which split the world vertically across class lines and along national lines, Roy's thesis maintained the class struggle by splitting the world horizontally across national borders and along class lines. This was pure Marxism, glorifying class struggle to the exclusion of patriotism.

The Marxian tenability of Roy's thesis does not take away the merit of Lenin's exposition of the problem of colonial revolution as it focussed attention upon the difference between the proletariat and the socialist—the class-conscious worker, for whom the struggle is not for bread but for socialism. "The revolution will not be able to retain single one of its gain if you, in your factory committees, merely concern yourself with worker's technical or purely financial interest."²⁰ He, therefore urged that the most class-conscious and organised workers must take power in their hands. The workers must become the ruling class in the state. Lenin did not share Marx's faith in the spontaneous development of class consciousness. Spontaneity represented a non-rational revolt of mind against society, which might coincide with class interest, but in the long run, it would hinder its progress. Hence, the need for politically conscious proletariat and class-conscious worker—the need ignored by Roy in India. As such, there was no alternative but to support the bourgeoisie in their efforts to overthrow British imperialism. By exploiting national unrest, the Comintern could promote revolution without waiting for class antagonism to mature in India. The compromise formula on colonial revolution, which emerged

20. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965, p. 477.

from this conflict, was more in tune with Roy's thesis. The Second Congress of the Communist International decided to support "revolutionary movements of liberation" rather than "bourgeois-democratic liberation movements."²¹ Though some communists continued to argue on its basis that the Comintern must support all colonial national movements, Roy consistently maintained that the term 'revolutionary movements of liberation' excluded certain types of bourgeois nationalist struggles. Roy's thesis proved well founded. Although overestimating the appeal of communism to the Indian proletariat, Roy correctly predicted that a colonial policy which advocates both the support of bourgeois-nationalism and the encouragement of proletarian class consciousness will fall victim to its internal contradictions. The wavering role of Indian communists in freedom struggle justifies Roy's apprehensions. Roy's rejection of Indian bourgeoisie as a national class emerged into espousal of proletarian hegemony of the Indian revolution.

IMPERIAL LIQUIDATION AND DECOLONISATION

Over the ensuing years, Roy developed concept of colonial revolution around four central themes :

- i) ensuring communist leadership for each stage of revolution,²²
- ii) the utility of limited cooperation with basically hostile bourgeois democratic revolutionaries at the early stage,²³
- iii) perception of the wavering petty-bourgeois attitude in class-collaboration,²⁴

21. "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions (adopted at the Second Comintern Congress), Theses and Statute of the Third (Communist) International), *op. cit.*, p. 70.

22. M. N. Roy "An Address to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern," *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 2, No. 116, 1922, pp. 988-990.

23. M. N. Roy, "New Orientation in Indian Nationalism," *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 16, pp. 299-300.

24. Speech by M. N. Roy at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern on July 1, 1924, *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, No. 50, 1924, pp. 518-519.

iv) the desirability of a communist led petty-bourgeois capitalist reforms as necessary step towards the socialist revolution.²⁵

At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, 1928, strategical and tactical disagreements emerged over Roy's exposition of the Indian revolution, which indicated the trend towards imperial liquidation, and thus came to be branded as the theory of decolonisation. The theory itself was not new, but there was novelty in the politico-economic argument with which Roy expressed it. His argument was that increased industrialisation in India had created a manufacturing bourgeoisie which found itself competing with the imperialists in the exploitation of the masses. As it grew, the new bourgeoisie started demanding concessions from the imperialists, and in order to win them threatened to side with the masses. This created a revolutionary situation, and as its revolutionary potential increased, the imperialists granted the concessions.²⁶ The degree of concessions brought about imperial liquidation in proportion. The new bourgeoisie were thus brought nearer to running their own affairs—hence the term 'decolonisation.' As they were drawn more and more into partnership with the imperialists in exploiting the masses, the gulf between the two widened. In exchange for the imperialist concessions, the bourgeois would dampen the revolutionary ardour of the masses to save imperialism from the process of liquidation. "The new economic policy of British imperialism in India sharpens the class differentiation and ripens the class struggle in the face of which nationalist struggle based on capitalist antagonism loses its importance."²⁷ This was only a slightly different way of saying what Roy had always maintained, namely, that the Indian bourgeoisie was not a revolutionary factor and could not be regarded as an ally in the revolution.

Roy charged the Indian bourgeoisie with the accusation that it was rallied on the side of counter-revolution, and, therefore, "Indian National Revolution has passed its bourgeois stage. It must still realise a programme which objectively and histori-

25. M. N. Roy, "Revolution and Counter Revolution in China," *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, No. 42, 1927, p. 926.

26. M. N. Roy, "Imperialism and Indian Nationalism," *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1928, pp. 1-3.

27. M. N. Roy, "The Role of the Bourgeoisie in the National Revolution," *Masses of India*, III, November, 1927, p. 7.

cally, is the programme of bourgeois revolution, but it is no longer a bourgeois revolution, because it can and will succeed only by breaking the bounds of capitalist society.”²⁸ Contained in this theory were certain tactical imperatives. The only strategy justified by the theory of decolonisation would be opposition to the bourgeois political organisations, for any other course would help the Indian bourgeoisie increase its share in the exploitation of masses. An important basis for Roy’s distrust of Indian bourgeoisie emerged from his perception of an important war-time shift in British policies. Unable, during the First World War, to keep Indian markets supplied with manufactured goods, Great Britain, according to Roy, reversed its traditional policy of keeping India industrially backward, brought the Indian capital with a free field of development. In consequence, the Indian capitalist class had acquired such a secure economic position that it was no longer possible for the British Government to ignore bourgeois political demands, and these were largely met by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The object behind this remarkable change on the part of British imperialism was to split the revolutionary movement by making it clear to the bourgeoisie that it was no longer impossible for it to realise its ambition under British rule. That was the only course left to avert the consequences of new economic compulsions, and to halt the process of imperial liquidation. “The social basis of British rule could be widened and deepened only by drawing at least the upper strata of the Nationalist bourgeoisie within the economic orbit of imperialism.”²⁹ The economic concessions found expression in grant of fiscal autonomy which meant that India would be autonomous in her financial and trade operations.

The desire for compromise was not one-sided. Roy noticed that the Indian bourgeoisie did not need “the superficial political radicalism of the middle-class intellectual.”³⁰ Therefore, the right wing of the Swaraj Party, which represented the capitalist interests, declared in favour of political peace and broke

28. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

29. M. N. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, London: R. Bishop, 1926, p. 12.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

away to join the Indian liberals. Here, Roy was confusing the honourable cooperation of the Swarajists and responsive co-operation of Liberals. He was oversimplifying the nature of the Indian revolution by over-emphasising the point that both concurred on principle that cooperation with the British Government was the best practical policy. Yet, Roy makes significant contribution to the understanding of Indian thought and politics, which he presented as dominated by "the economics of compromise" and "the politics of compromise," and which constitutes the substance of Roy's theory of de-colonisation.

Roy's exposition of Indian politics in terms of colonial revolution reveals that bourgeoisie could not be permanently won over. They became more ambitious with every instalment of concessions. "It knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromises with the imperial capital, till the time comes when it will be in a position to openly contend for the right of monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner. But it also knows that British imperialism cannot be overthrown without the help of the masses."³¹ The bourgeoisie would deceive the masses in order to win their support and achieve aggrandisement, and would entice them into the National Congress. The masses still unconscious of their own purpose, would follow, for a time, but would not remain for ever a reliable force behind the political movement of the bourgeoisie. The overthrow of the British rule would be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses but how this joint action could be consummated still remained a question. The analysis of the conditions of the masses would help to understand the gulf that divided these two revolutionary forces. In the long run, Roy believed that the divorce of the masses from the bourgeois leadership was inevitable. As bourgeois nationalism would end in a compromise with imperial supremacy, the liberation of India would be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants—"consciously organised and fighting on the ground of class-struggle."³² Roy remained consistent in his appraisal of the Indian bourgeoisie, and their role in the national revolution,

31. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, Geneva: J. B. Target, 1922, p. 41.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

though he differed from time to time in his assesment of bourgeois relationships with Britain and with the Indian masses.

In 1922, Roy told the Fourth Congress of the Comintern that the dislocation of the capitalist equilibrium in Europe was forcing imperialism to look for new markets by which new equilibrium could be established. This was being achieved by promoting industrialisation in countries like India.³³ Initially Roy admitted that the various revolutionary upheavals in the colonial countries had been a spontaneous reaction to intensified economic exploitation by the imperialists. With increased industrialisation and opportunities for profit, the national bourgeoisie which once supported the revolution now found it more convenient to seek imperialist protection. As a consequence, the national revolutionary movements in these countries was not going to be successful under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. It was only under the leadership of a political party, representing the workers and the peasants that national revolutionary struggle could come to final victory in these countries. The thesis adopted by the Fourth Congress of Comintern supported Roy's analysis of colonial revolution. "The dominant classes in the colonies and semi-colonial countries are unable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism as this struggle is converted into a revolutionary mass movement."³⁴ Yet the contradiction, so evident at the Second Congress, had by no means been resolved. The Fourth Congress, while upholding Roy in its thesis, was at the same time laying plans for tactical cooperation in China with the middle-class Kuomintang. How could these incompatible course be reconciled? How could precise moment be seen when the national bourgeoisie had exhausted its revolutionary force and gone over to collaboration?

In 1924 at the Fifth Congress, Roy asserted that the Indian bourgeoisie understood better that the discontent of the masses was economic and not nationalistic. It, therefore, was "run-

33. M. N. Roy, An Address to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 2, No. 116, 1922, pp. 988-990.

34. From the Fourth to the Fifth World Congress: *Report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1924, p. 318.

ning straight into the arms of British imperialism.”³⁵ Roy was displaying maturity in urging the communists to adapt their policies to the changing nature of the revolutionary support given by various revolutionary groups at different times. He conceded that the thesis of the Second Congress did not debar Comintern from supporting the national liberation movement in the colonies, though he maintained that it had urged direct contact with the revolutionary organisations of the working class and the peasants. By 1926, Roy was theorising to the effect that bourgeois nationalism had ended in complete compromise with imperialism in India. The schism between the big bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie had become wide enough to split the Swaraj Party, which previously had served the purpose of a bridge between the constitutionalism of big bourgeoisie and the revolutionary inclination of the petty-bourgeoisie. “The split in the Swaraj Party means the burning of that bridge.”³⁶ The last obstacle to a happy compromise had been removed. How then, in view of his distrust of the nationalist bourgeoisie, did Roy propose that the revolutionary movement be developed in India? In 1926, Roy as a member of the Foreign Bureau of the Indian Communist Party urged the communists to organise themselves as an illegal faction inside a legal Workers’ and Peasants’ Party, which could be organised to include left-wing elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, which had rejected the national bourgeois leadership. The object was gradually to develop it into a real Communist Party to act as vanguard of Indian revolution.

It was against this background that Roy came under fire at the Sixth Congress for his theory of increased industrialisation and his attitude towards the nationalist bourgeoisie. Earlier in September, 1927, Roy had prepared a draft resolution on Indian question which further developed his previous idea on the problem of colonial revolution. “The implication of new policy is gradual decolonisation of India which will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of dependency to dominion status. The Indian bourgeois instead of being kept down as

35. *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 4, No. 50, 1924, p. 519.

36. M. N. Roy, “New Economic Policy of British Imperialism,” *The Communist International*, No. 21, 1926, p. 70.

potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of imperialist finance. From a backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country—member of 'the British Commonwealth of free nations.' India is in process of de-colonisation in so far as the policy, forced upon imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods."³⁷ Industrialisation in India had been seriously exaggerated by Roy. This shift in favour of industrialisation was dictated by the exigencies of war, not by the grand design of British imperialism. The Sixth Congress concluded from Roy's theory that "the de-colonisation policy of the British imperialism would lead to the weakening of and dissolution of the British Empire."³⁸ This was too much to swallow. The voluntary cessation of imperialism obviate the revolutionary role of the communists. Indeed, Roy never meant it. It would be error to say that Great Britain was participating in the industrialisation of India for the sake of the development of productive forces there. Great Britain had its own interests. But to say that Britain was going back to the old policy of the nineteenth century would be a great mistake. It also did not mean that Roy's theory of de-colonisation presented imperialism as a progressive force in colonies. There was no essential disagreement over Roy's assesment of national bourgeoisie. The Indian bourgeoisie was a counter-revolutionary force but that did not mean, it could not be used even in the development of the mass revolution.

It may be relevant to examine Roy's de-colonisation theory in the context of the thesis, adopted by the Sixth Congress of Comintern :

- (i) In India, the policy of British imperialism, which used to retard the development of native industry, evoked great dissatisfaction among the Indian bourgeoisie.

37. M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, Calcutta: Saraswaty Library, 1938, p. 32.

38. Kuusinen on the "De-colonisation Problem at the VI Congress of the Communist International," *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 68, p. 1226.

- (ii) The collapse of the national revolutionary movement and the gradual decline of bourgeois nationalism enables British imperialism once more to return to a policy of hindering the industrial development of India.
- (iii) Insufficient attention is given to the realisation of precisely those tasks which the Second Congress of the Communist International had already characterised as the basic tasks of the communist parties in the colonial countries—the task of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movement inside the nation itself.
- (iv) Special workers' and peasants' parties, whatever revolutionary character they possess, can too easily at particular periods be converted into ordinary parties and, accordingly, communists are not recommended to organise such parties.
- (v) The Communists must utilise the connections of the existing workers' and peasants' parties with the toiling masses for strengthening their own party.³⁹

When subjected to scrutiny, the first two statements concede that there have been times when British imperialism had not hindered the development of Indian industry. The third statement is directly in line with the policy, Roy had been advocating since the Second Congress. The fourth and fifth statements leave the proper role of Workers' and Peasants' parties vague and ambiguous. Nowhere does the thesis present a consistent and unequivocal challenge to Roy's viewpoint, expressed simultaneously. As Roy put it, the Indian bourgeois leaders, in order to make a favourable bargain with imperialism, were seeking to harness popular discontent by maintaining control over the politically radical bourgeoisie. The possibility of petty-bourgeois rank and file breaking away from its leadership was still remote but the proletarian masses had broken away from them. The development of independent political action by the working class was splitting the petty-bourgeois radical nationalists into ever-diverging tendencies, one advancing in the direc-

39. *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, 1928, pp. 1660, 1666, 1671, 1673.

tion of a revolutionary alliance with the working class in the Workers' and Peasants' Party, the other moving towards fascism.⁴⁰ Reiterating this in December, 1928, Roy observed that the failure of the Indian big bourgeoisie to insist on India's complete independence was contributing to further differentiation of Indian classes, with the left petty-bourgeoisie gathering strength and forming an independent organisation. However, the radicalisation of the petty-bourgeoisie would fail in its purpose unless it received the leadership of a more revolutionary class. "The Indian national movement can further develop only under the hegemony of the proletariat."⁴¹ This was the logical result of the process of "de-revolutionisation of the nationalist bourgeoisie,"⁴² a process, parallel to the de-colonisation.

It is unfortunate that the Sixth Congress charged Roy with social democratic theory, and ascribed to de-colonisation a meaning, which he certainly never intended, namely the voluntary cessation of imperialist exploitation. Roy did not hold the opinion that "British imperialism will lead the Indian people by hand to freedom."⁴³ This subjective factor alone was not decisive. The objective factor indicated that if Britain lost trade, she had neither the power nor the incentive to remain in India. In order to stabilise its economic basis, British Imperialism was obliged to adopt a policy which could not be put into practice without making certain concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. These concessions were not conquered by the nationalist bourgeoisie. They were gifts reluctantly made by imperialism. The term 'de-colonisation' was used tentatively by way of indicating a tendency, and relatively, only in connection with the bourgeoisie who constituted a very small fraction of the entire population. Nowhere did Roy refer that the tendency affected the entire people.

Roy's approach to imperialism was determined by the situation, not by dogma. For him, "Marxist and Leninist con-

40. M. N. Roy, "The Indian Constitution," *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 54, 1928, pp. 954-955.

41. M. N. Roy, "Indian National Congress," *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, No. 91, 1928, pp. 1732-1733.

42. Roy, *Our Differences*, p. 107.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

ception of the nature of imperialism does not exclude the maturing of conditions indicating degeneration, disorganisation and decay of imperialism as preliminary to its final overthrow.”⁴⁴ The post-war imperialism was not in a position to continue colonial exploitation in pre-war forms. It was not possible to lay down a hard and fast rule determining the relations between the colonies and the imperialist monopolies in all periods and under all conditions. Obviously, the crux of the question was the internal contradiction of British imperialism, which was hardly touched by the Comintern. What determined imperialist monopoly inevitably operated as de-colonising force as far as India was concerned.

Was Roy abandoning his 1920 thesis in his theory of imperial liquidation and de-colonisation? That was not so. With the de-revolutionisation of bourgeoisie, the Indian national movement could further develop under the hegemony of the proletariat but this would not eliminate other social forces. There would be a close fighting alliance with all those elements of national revolution, which would result into a broad-based anti-imperialist united front. Until the end of 1928, the communists in India were generally following Roy’s colonial thesis on revolution, which enabled them to acquire important position in the national movement as well as in trade unions. But the position was reversed by the thesis of the Sixth Congress. The new sectarian policy led to the isolation of the communists in Indian politics. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern, however, rectified it. Roy was made the scapegoat for Comintern failures in China, and also a victim of its internal intrigues. “*The desire of the Communist Party of Great Britain to establish its protectorate over the Indian Communist Party had a great deal to do with it.*”⁴⁵ Roy must be discredited and removed as a major hurdle. Stalin was bent on making ‘de-colonisation’ an odious term to secure Roy’s exit from the Comintern.

One may appreciate Roy’s observation that the Comintern did “more harm to the cause of Indian revolution than any

44. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

other single factor.”⁴⁶ The abandonment of Roy’s thesis on revolution by the Comintern did not provide even an elbow-room to the communists at the time of the formation of “national bourgeois state,”⁴⁷ in India in 1947—the development which established the validity of Roy’s theory of de-colonisation and imperial liquidation. De-colonisation and de-revolutionisation of the Indian bourgeoisie emerged into historical reality in August, 1947 in Indian politics. As predicted by Roy, India marched from the state of dependency to that of a dominion. De-colonisation theory is the culmination of Roy’s thesis on colonial revolution. It adds to the existing knowledge on dynamics of British response to India’s struggle for freedom, and represents Roy’s major contribution towards the Marxian understanding of the form and process of transfer of power in India.

46. *Russian Revolution*, Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, 1949, p. 219.

47. Balabushevich and Dyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

CHAPTER II

CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN SOCIALIST THOUGHT

Modern Indian politics is the expression of a paradox. The most startling illustration of this paradox is found in the emergence of socialism as the prominent ideology of contemporary India. The Indian economy is essentially agricultural, and yet here almost all political parties and movements are imbued with socialist ideas. From the 'twenties of this century two distinct streams of socialist thought began to pour in from the West, one emanating from the Fabians and the other from the Comintern. M. N. Roy introduced a section of discontented Indian intellectuals to the theory and practice of socialism, and completed their "conversion to Marxism."¹ Organisationally, Roy was "the first link between Communist International and nascent Indian communism."² On his return to India, Roy secretly attended the Karachi Session of the Congress in 1931, and is believed to be the author of the Resolution on Fundamental Rights adopted at this session, though Jawaharlal Nehru claims that he himself drafted it, and Roy had "absolutely nothing to do with it."³ Did Roy influence Nehru in giving socialist orientation to the resolution? This may well be, for Nehru was considerably influenced by Roy's views in the early thirties. It contained a blueprint, which the Indian National Congress was committed to incorporate in the Constitution of free India. On his conviction in Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy Case, the authorities felt relieved as it "removed from the political arena a dangerous enemy of capitalism, landlordism and imperialism, and struck another blow at Indian communism generally."⁴ After his release in November, 1936, Roy continued to speak

1. J. P. Narayan, *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, Rajghat, Kashi : Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh Prakasham, 1959, p. 10.

2. M. R. Masani, *The Communist Party of India*, London : Drek Verschoyle, 1954, pp. 23-24.

3. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London; John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1942, p. 268.

4. *India and Communism*, Simla : Government of India, 1933, p. 168.

and write on socialism, and he remained a Marxist upto 1940. The ideological break with communism came after the Second World War when he saw the danger of Stalin's left-wing policy. He recalled that Stalin had once told him that "the communist parties were all useless, and that the instrument for the establishment of world communism could only be the Red Army."⁵ The failure of Red Napoleonism in Europe accomplished Roy's disenchantment with Marxism-Leninism.

MARXIAN INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN HISTORY

Roy makes a significant contribution to Indian socialist thought by giving Marxian interpretation to Indian history in its contemporary set-up. Its basic feature was the gradual decay of feudal economy and the slow but steady rise of capitalism. Feudalism as the basis of social economics received the first death blow in the earlier years of the British possession in the middle of the 18th century when political power passed into the hands of a foreign commercial bourgeoisie. The last vestiges of feudal power were shattered by the failure of 1857 uprising, which Roy presents as "the last effort of the dethroned feudal potentates to regain their power."⁶ The new state established by the British Crown was an instrument of capitalist production. The conquest of India was the conquest on behalf of the interests of bourgeoisie of home country, their necessity for market, export of capital, and new fields of exploitation.

Roy's class-structure of Indian society includes landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie and working class. Whereas the intellectuals are treated as part of bourgeoisie, landless peasants fall in the category of working class. The rise of the modern Indian bourgeoisie is ascribed to the investment of land-holding class of their accumulated wealth in commercial and industrial enterprises. But the Indian intellectuals—the basis of modern bourgeoisie—were the product of British Raj, which found it more profitable to employ natives in the administrative posts of lower ranks than bringing men from

5. Sibnarayan Ray, *M. N. Roy : Philosopher Revolutionary*, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1959, p. 34.

6. Roy, *India in Transition*, p. 17.

England for these jobs. Their tremendous growth forced intelligentsia to "transcend the limits marked out for them by the foreign rulers;"⁷ and to capture the professions of medicine, law and teaching. The increasing wealth of intellectuals and the absence of the profitable means of investment caused discontentment with the British Government. Roy explains the economic necessity forcing "the intellectual bourgeoisie to begin its political struggle, which was initiated in the form of Indian National Congress."⁸ Its object was to replace or at least to curtail the power of British Raj, which was impeding the economic development of bourgeoisie.

Relying upon the loyalty of landed aristocracy and the passivity of the masses, "British imperialism could afford to ignore the feeble demands of the rising bourgeoisie."⁹ Two factors intervened to alter the situation. Whereas the First World War made Indian bourgeoisie restless to participate in the exploitation of economic resources, the growing poverty and unemployment produced widespread discontentment among the masses, and terminated their state of passivity. Both these factors were working against the British rule, though socially speaking, they were contradictory one to the other. To prevent the union was the natural task of the British Government. Roy refers to that element in bourgeoisie, "which could be won over, or at least whose actions could be moderated by means of political concessions."¹⁰ Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms represented British desire for reconciliation and its willingness to "admit the Indian bourgeoisie to a junior partnership in the exploitation of the country."¹¹ But with every concession, the bourgeoisie became more ambitious. At the same time, it knew very well that British imperialism could not be overthrown without the help of the masses. Therefore, in Roy's opinion, the Indian bourgeoisie and the masses constituted objective factors of revolution. It is interesting to find Roy presenting Muslim League founded in 1905 as the spokesman of Muslim capitalists and

7. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

9. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 11.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

landed aristocracy in opposite to the Congress, but subsequently abandoning its original role and merging itself into "the national movement of Indian bourgeoisie as a class."¹² This was stretching Marxian interpretation of Indian politics too far.

Explaining the place of peasantry in his analysis of Indian class-structure, Roy found the productive power of land drawn into the orbit of the capitalist system. The introduction of British laws facilitated the mortgage and sale of land, turning bulk of peasantry into tenants of money-lenders. The rural poverty had become so chronic and chances of any radical change so non-existent that Roy found "a complete agrarian revolution as the only solution."¹³ Appreciating its potentiality, the Indian National Congress admitted the rank and file of the peasantry to strengthen the organisation. The policy of the British Government changed "in proportion as the social character of the English bourgeoisie went on changing."¹⁴ To recall Marx, "forms of poverty must be continually reproduced in order that the political organisation may endure."¹⁵ Thus the lot of peasantry standing between two classes of exploited must be improved if agrarian trouble was to be warded off.

Turning his attention to the Indian proletariat, Roy defines it as "the class of industrial workers living exclusively on wages earned in the cities."¹⁶ The belated growth of proletariat was neither due to the choice of India to remain backward, nor to conservatism of her people and shyness of native capital. "Colonial exploitation by imperialist capital prevented the normal economic development of the country."¹⁷ Indian society which was in the stage of mercantilism at the time of British conquest was brought under the exploitation of industrial finance and imperial capital. Thus began the proletarianisation of the Indian masses. While the artisan class of old town was ruined economically and was absorbed in the ranks of the pauperised

12. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

13. *India in Transition*, p. 85.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

15. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Chicago : C. H. Kerr and Co., 1933, p. 401.

16. *India in Transition*, p. 89.

17. M. N. Roy, *India's Problem and its Solution*, N. P. : 1923, p. 3.

peasantry, a new class of industrial wage-earners employed in craft industry, was coming into existence in the modern cities.

To Roy, so long native capital was denied opportunity of development, the class differentiation of Indian society remained confused. The rise of national bourgeoisie broke the social stagnation. Though "not yet so sharp,"¹⁸ class exploitation within the structure of the exploited nation became a social phenomenon. The Indian proletariat could not help learning from experience that they must fight to earn the right to live as human beings. The growth of class-consciousness became wider with the development of native bourgeoisie. Roy found class-struggle raging in India simultaneously with the national struggle. Indian proletariat became a powerful social factor as it introduced real potentiality in the movement for national liberation. The class-struggle acquired identity in Indian politics, and the freedom struggle was looked upon by Roy as a prelude to the social emancipation of the working class.

Roy's Marxian interpretation of contemporary India also covers his treatment of the middle-class, described by him as "petty-intellectual workers . . . a different kind of proletariat."¹⁹ Though economically the part of propertyless wage-earners, they clung to bourgeois customs and traditions. Their economic condition was objectively destined to make them revolutionary, but their social prejudices not only prevented the growth of their class-consciousness, but actually dragged them into the depths of decay and demoralisation. The British Government brought into existence more of these ministerial workers than could be absorbed in the organism of capitalist structure. Even after the political independence of the country had been achieved, Roy predicted that "this army of petty and semi-intellectual workers" would "still remain considerably unemployable, because a bourgeois national government would not be able to absorb it completely, nor change radically its economic position in the social organisation."²⁰ The fundamental thing is, that in every

18. M. N. Roy, *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*, London : Communist Party of Great Britain, 1926, p. 69.

19. *India in Transition*, p. 105.

20. *Future of the Middle-class*, Patna: Radical Democratic Party, 1944, p. 20.

sense of social economics, this class has been proletarianised. The substitution of one capitalist government by another would not change their position. Their social prejudices must succumb before pressing economic necessities. It would not be long before they realise that their salvation lies in the frank recognition of their position. In other words, the lot of the middle-class intellectuals lies with the proletariat.

Roy's interpretation of contemporary social structure in India seems to be wishful exposition of facts. In the first flush of Marxian enthusiasm, Roy forgets that social being itself is ideòlogical in so far as society is a product of human will, and so human thought. The materialistic conception of history errs profoundly when it regards social life as independent of thought. Roy exaggerates the proletarianisation of Indian worker. Even today, most of the workers in factories are in a state of semi-proletarianisation because a part of the year they have to go back to the villages, the city failing to employ them. The Indian worker has not yet been enslaved to the machine. Tied to the soil, he is essentially a villager at heart. Roy simplifies interpretation of Indian history to the exclusion of caste-system. Till today the innumerable caste-divisions are found existing in Indian society, and the barriers, separating these castes have not been broken yet. The newly enfranchised proletariat masses like the language of traditional politics which so largely turns about caste.

Nonetheless, Roy is vindicated for his views on Indian bourgeoisie, who, by default, have not played that socially progressive role which was played by the same class in Europe. Equally correct is Roy's analysis of Indian peasantry. In India, land still remains the main means of production. Consequently, the relation of ownership in land is the decisive factor in Indian economic life. If that relation is not changed, no change in the social structure of India is possible. The radical programme of land-ceiling, being implemented by the state governments under the direction of the present Central Government, is a testimony to Roy's analysis of agrarian revolution in India.

Roy's assesment of the Indian middle class may be found partly valid. It is being progressively proletarianised by the static income and rising prices. However, it may be observed that being the spearhead of the nationalist movement in its early

days, it has hardly been displaced by subsequent developments in Indian politics, particularly those following the emergence of Gandhi. Of course, at present, it is in great measure being bypassed and left behind by the new politics of bread and butter. Yet it provides commentators, the articulate class—the journalists, teachers and publicists. It is not of course the case that the politicians no longer include among representatives of this group. But it is no longer in command and its influence is diminishing. The distaste and frustration which it feels colour profoundly the picture of Indian politics as presented to all who stand out of it.

CONCEPTION OF SOCIALISM

Related to Maxian interpretation of Indian history is Roy's conception of socialism, conceived by him as the philosophy of working class. The proletarian struggle for socialism is not in consequence of intellectual conviction, but of necessity realised through experience. Socialism is more than an economic theory and ideology of social reconstruction. It is a revolutionary philosophy of life.

Roy equates socialism with equalitarianism. He does not seek to level down humanity to a uniform standard. "In the socialist society, every man and woman will have to attain the highest level of creativeness and individual progress."²¹ As a romantic, Roy envisages the disappearance of inequality, but as a realist, he considers it as a remote ideal. Only all obstacles on the road towards that ideal will be removed. But everybody, even then, may not develop the same potentiality for progress.

Roy found Indian working class too backward to realise the necessity of fighting for socialism. The recruits to the socialist movement came mostly from the educated middle-class, and as such it could deviate into a reformist movement. The only safeguard was to build it on sound philosophical foundation. This intellectual approach leads Roy to reject Marxism as a dogma to be accepted as a system of faith. Socialism is not religion to be followed blindly. Correct understanding of

21. *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1938, p. 4.

Marx would enable Indian socialists to develop a revolutionary ideology to suit the country. Roy deprecates the quality of believers among the Indian leftists, who "have turned their back on Manu to lay their confidence in Marx."²² A Marxist is not required to believe in a set of doctorines claiming finality, and, it is perfectly legitimate to "elaborate, amplify and even revise the teachings of Marx in the light of the knowledge of modern science."²³ Roy, therefore, did not consider it necessary that developments in India must follow the same line as Marx predicted for European development.

One may draw inference from Roy that Marxian method does not stand the test of modern scientific theory. Marx claimed that he could predict the general course of human history with certainty. This claim is scientifically untenable because of the many variables involved. Marx projected experiences of the past into the future irrespective of changes in circumstances and alteration of ethical standards. In denouncing the value judgments of his contemporaries and of former generations, Marx expressed value judgment of his own, both negative and positive. Marx did not follow the rules of scientific method as now understood.

For Roy, the essence of Marxism lies in the principles of materialism. The object of Marxian philosophy is to remake the world in which man assumes the function of God. Accepting Marxian version that man's ideas, beliefs and behaviour are all determined by the environments of life, Roy asserts that man at the same time "reacts on those environments and shapes them by his reactions."²⁴ The spiritual being of man is causally connected with his physical being. The mode with which he maintains his physical being determines all other aspects of his life. There is nothing arbitrary about it. Man possesses the capacity to remake society, though his desire and will are limited by these conditions. To this extent, Roy is willing to accept the role of environment. History, in the eyes of Marx, is not something that man suffers; it is something they make, and in

22. M. N. Roy, "What is Marxism," *Independent India*, Vol. II, No. 8, Bombay, 1938, p. 124.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

24. "What is Marxism," *Independent India*, Vol. II, No. 7, 1938, p. 107.

making of history, ideas, too, may play their role, for as Engels put it, they are "part of the material world."²⁵ Roy gives new complexion to the whole controversy by stating that "the fundamental principle of Marx is that ideas are realities,"²⁶ and by reality, he means objective reality. Once the process of ideation has taken place in human mind, ideas are as real as any other physical object. Roy clearly precludes pre-determinism. Marx did not cast "horoscope of history".²⁷ He thus interprets the Marxian theory as technological determinism. It constitutes a departure from Marxism since the term 'relations of production' in Marxian usage is but a synonym of the term 'class structure'—the key feature of any society which a Marxist investigates before searching for any data. Of technology, Marx speaks only as an important key to the understanding of this basic structure of society. No doubt, in drawing attention to unforeseen consequences of human action, Marx was making a contribution of real value. Yet it was one which he was only able to make by playing down the element of will, though he certainly did not want to exclude it because a doctrine of social development which represented man as automaton was little calculated to further the cause of revolution. Yet how can the will enter into his scheme? Certainly not as that of individual since he does not recognise the individual save as a member of his class.

Roy does not identify Marxism with communism. Whereas Marxism is a philosophy, communism is only a political practice—the means to the end. Bolshevism is an unconscious and, therefore, incomplete substitution of practical science of revolution for that revolutionary philosophy of the universe which Marx created. Socialism or, communism for that matter, is a common ownership of the means of production, which becomes a practical possibility only upon the socialisation of the process of production itself. This takes Roy to examine the question of private property, whose origin, he finds "in individually per-

25. *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, New York: International Publishers, n.d., p. 30.

26. "What is Marxism," *Independent India*, Vol II, No. 6, 1938, p. 93.

27. *Russian Revolution*, p. 8.

formed labour.”²⁸ But when industrial development attains a stage where labour is no longer performed individually, the idea of private property loses all its meaning. Private property as a moral right and socially useful institution is never abolished. At a stage of economic development, it simply disappears. As elaborated by Roy, “the abolition of private property does not take place subjectively. It is the outcome of an objective process of social evolution.”²⁹ When labour is performed collectively, its products must be collectively owned. Inasmuch as the mechanisation of industry, which socialises production, takes place under capitalism, it is capitalism which destroys private property as an economic necessity. “Socialism only abolishes a legal fiction. It buries body of what has been kicked by capitalism.”³⁰ The abolition of commodity production would mean the restoration of individual property in the Lockian sense as the one which man has in his person as well as goods. Private property must cease to be an economic necessity before it can be abolished.

Roy rejects the belief that the peculiar structure of Indian society precludes the development of private property to the stage where it becomes an instrument of exploitation. He finds in Manu “the law-giver of the medieval forms of class-domination.”³¹ Manu’s laws were instrument for the preservation of the privileges of the priesthood and its allies. One need not be de-nationalised disciple of Marx to realise that India must repudiate the teachings of Manu to see the evils of property.

Roy believed that eventually India would have to introduce socialism. But he rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary means to achieve it.³² A revolution cannot be made to order. If at certain level of development, the established system of capitalist production becomes a hindrance to social progress, the system should be abolished and “supplanted

28. “Democracy and Socialism,” *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1937, p. 12.

29. *Our Task in India*, The Bengal Committee of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class, 1932, p. 29.

30. Roy, “Democracy and Socialism,” *Loc. cit.*

31. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

32. “Social Revolution and Socialism,” *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 51, 1938, p. 9.

by the socialist form of society.”³³ But in an industrially backward country like India, the establishment of proletarian dictatorship was a visionary ideal. The young Indian proletariat being numerically weak and politically inexperienced could not shoulder single-handed the task of carrying through a great revolution. Roy is opposed to dogma being made of the idea of the proletarian dictatorship. Socialism implies greater measure of democracy. In the highly industrialised country, the dictatorship of the proletariat would be real rule of majority, and it would not be dictatorship at all. It was altogether out of place in India as it would mean rule of minority, and when the proletariat grew numerically, the necessity for it to “establish dictatorship may disappear.”³⁴ Proletarian dictatorship does not emerge in this perspective of development. Roy’s exposition of socialism does not lead to a communistic view.

SOCIALISM AND BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

This enables Roy to analyse the problem of bourgeois democratic revolution in terms of socialism. The nature of every social revolution is determined by the alignment of classes involved in that revolution. Roy characterised the impending Indian revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution, which would take the form of “clash between a class based on land as the means of production and another based on new means of production, namely capital.”³⁵ Abolition of non-productive ownership of land is the fundamental feature of social transformation. The only generally beneficial line of economic development opened to India was to carry out “an agrarian revolution, and build up modern industry under the control of a really democratic state.”³⁶ That rendered the bourgeois democratic revolution a historical necessity for India.

To begin with, the peasantry must be relieved of the bur-

33. M. N. Roy, “Proletarian Dictatorship,” *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 50, 1938, p. 10.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

35. M. N. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, 1947, p. 160.

36. M. N. Roy, *Letters to the Congress Socialist Party*, Bombay: Renaissance Publishing Co., 1937, p. 15.

dens which kept them in a state of economic bankruptcy. The accomplishment of this basic task would increase the purchasing power of the great bulk of the population. The essential conditions for rapid development of modern industry would be created. Larger number of people would be absorbed in the process of production. More labour performed with higher degree of productivity would increase the volume of new wealth created. The impending revolution would not abolish private property. Its task would be to "transfer the ownership of the main means of production from one class to another."³⁷ This is not socialism, which stipulates common ownership of the means of production. But Roy did not consider socialism an immediate issue for India as "socialism is not a matter of desire," but "a matter of necessity."³⁸ It would be established when it becomes a historical necessity, which must be felt by a majority. However, the bourgeois democratic revolution in India would create conditions favourable for a direct development towards the establishment of socialism. There would be an intervening period, during which conditions for socialism would be created. The introduction of the mechanical means of production on a large scale, the abolition of all pre-capitalist restrictions on production, the attainment of a certain minimum economic level, are the historic pre-conditions for establishing socialism. A *socialist India* could not spring up overnight.

The problem of transition to socialism had two parts. The first concerned with the achievement of a free Indian democracy, and second with transformation of that order into socialist democracy. Roy, therefore, pleaded that the problem of India's struggle for freedom should be approached not from the point of view of socialism, but in terms of its actual contents, namely national democratic revolution. Political freedom, in Roy's opinion, was "the first to economic freedom and social emancipation."³⁹ So, nothing could be done for socialism directly, but much could be done for the creation of the pre-conditions for its establishment.

37. M. N. Roy, "National Freedom," *Independent India*, Vol. I. No. 1, 1937, p. 7.

38. "Socialism and Our Struggle for Freedom," *Independent India*, Vol. II, No. 26, 1938, p. 422.

39. *What Do We Want?* Geneve : J. B. Target, 1922, p. 11.

Posing the leadership problem, Roy concedes the inability of Indian proletariat to lead it, nor was the bourgeoisie able to assume this role. But the proletariat would be able to exercise hegemony, which Roy conceived as something distinct from leadership. Hegemony meant ideological influence, proportionately much greater than the physical strength. But how could a class wield ideological influence before it existed physically? In Roy's words, "an ideology resulting from the emergence of a new class in some parts of the world long before, becomes an integral part of the entire mankind."⁴⁰ The carriers of that message are the instruments through which the proletarian hegemony could be exercised on the bourgeois democratic revolution in India.

Roy gives shock to orthodox socialists by claiming that it was possible to carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution in India without plunging into capitalism. Won't it belie Marxism? As observed by Roy, Marxism implies recurring revolution in the means of production so long the goal of social revolution is not attained. Therefore, it would not contradict Marx if such a revolution so as to create the pre-conditions of socialism, did not take place in the framework of a capitalist society. "Economic development of India free from imperialist yoke, can take place dispensing with the system of capitalist exploitation."⁴¹ The fundamental fact would be a revolution in the means of production as a necessity for social evolution. That was law prescribed by Marx. In the past, democratic revolutions brought into existence the capitalist order of society. It was not likely to have the same consequences in India. The attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie was the guarantee against that. A democratic revolution taking place in the period of capitalist decay, but in an industrially backward country, asserted Roy, was not likely to "usher in a social order based on the private ownership of all the means of production."⁴² The purpose of the economic development under the new state would be to

40. *Scientific Politics*, p. 164.

41. Roy, *Our Task in India*, p. 31.

42. "Social Revolution and Socialism," *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 51, 1938, p. 10.

create the pre-conditions of socialism, but its peculiar non-capitalist nature would obviate the necessity for another revolution for the establishment of socialism. The bourgeois democratic revolution would transform itself, in course of time, into socialist revolution. The role of bourgeois democracy was to act as the foster-mother of the proletariat during the stage of pre-emancipation.

The contradiction in Roy, though not sharp, is quite obvious. This is revealed by Roy in his ideology of Twentieth Century Jacobinism. By which he means "the application of Marxism to pre-Marxist conditions."⁴³ The credit and responsibility of the Indian revolution would be neither of the proletariat nor of the bourgeoisie, but of the Jacobins—"the petty-bourgeoisie acting as the vanguard of the rising proletariat together with the proletariat acting as an integral part of the petit-bourgeoisie."⁴⁴ Roy had in mind the petty-bourgeoisie, who, at the time of the French Revolution, acted as the great grand father of the proletarian revolution. That is Jacobinism, which historically is the shadow of Marxism cast ahead. With such an interpretation of Marxism, it is not anomalous to say that all the problems belonging chronologically to the pre-Marxian age could be subjected to Marxian practice. That was the task which Roy was facing in India. This led him to see in Jacobinism a revolutionary ideology, and, he did not find it difficult to reconcile his Marxist conscience with the philosophical radicalism of the bourgeois revolution. The task of impending revolution in India was the liquidation of feudalism so that the process of economic development, creating conditions of socialism, should take place freely. Socialists were to do things which were done by the capitalists. Roy's Twentieth Century Jacobinism makes Marxists the representatives of the proletariat as well as of the bourgeoisie. Here the principle of identity is in operation. At a later stage, there would be conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But in the given situation, the actual identity is much greater than the would-be difference.

There are two factors in Roy's theory of bourgeois demo-

43. *Scientific Politics*, p. 171.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

cratic revolution : the bourgeoisie and the democracy. With the self-elimination of bourgeoisie, the revolution ceases to be capitalistic, but it remains democratic. Political freedom, conquest of power by masses, establishment of a genuine democratic state was the condition for social revolution. "The programme of democratic revolution combines the political and social aspects of nationalism."⁴⁵ By failing to secure the support and win the confidence of the masses, the ideological vanguard of the proletariat could not passively guide the course of revolution. The struggle must be conducted with a democratic programme, which would enable it to capture the leadership of the oppressed and exploited masses. From that strategic position, it would be able to defend the results of the democratic revolution against the usurpation of the bourgeoisie. By consolidating political power in a revolutionary democratic state, it would create conditions, political as well as industrial for the eventual establishment of socialism. Roy's conclusion of the whole matter was just like that of Bernstein that for the present, and for a long time to come, the task of the socialists would be to "organise the working classes politically and develop them as a democracy, and to fight for all reforms in the state—which are adopted to raise the working classes and transform the state in the direction of democracy."⁴⁶

The theory of bourgeois democratic revolution explains Roy's transition to revisionism. A man of strong loyalties, he was deeply pained to have to be critic of a system to which he had held so faithfully. This is probably the chief reason for his unrealistic insistence that revisionism was still Marxism. It would not be exaggeration to describe Roy as Bernstein of India. Bernstein, like Roy, in practice, redefined socialism to mean the Marxian minimum programme, and to discard maximal aims as utopian. A tendency may be noticed both in Roy and Bernstein to make the term socialism and democracy more and more synonymous, so that the fight for the latter can be regarded, ipso facto, as a fight for the former. As with Roy, so with Bern-

45. M. N. Roy, "Democracy and Socialism," *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1937, p. 4.

46. Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, New York: Huebsch, 1911, p. xii.

stein, the degree of democratisation actually achieved is an excellent barometer of the proletarian political morality. The attainment of political influence in the democratic process is mature enough to assume political responsibilities. The implication is clear : if the actual achievements of the socialist movement have so far been inadequate, the fault lies not with the democratic system but with the proletariat. This system makes sure that every class attains as much influence as it deserves. This is indeed a far cry from the Marxian critique of bourgeois society.

Roy seems to share the views of Rosa Luxemburg, a leading revisionist and contemporary of Lenin. She wanted socialism introduced, but she knew that her ideal of socialism could not be implemented without the widest possible democracy and freedom.⁴⁷ Political system is neither a matter of authority nor prescription but of endless experiment. Max Eastman, the most brilliant exponent of revisionist ideas appears to appreciate Roy's position by referring to "the hardheadedness of Marx and Engels."⁴⁸ However, in orthodox circle, Roy's revisionism may be run down as "revolutionary defencism,"⁴⁹ which is treason to socialism, and charged with opportunism. It may be unfair to accuse Roy with the chops and changes of petty-politics, though to the purist, the word 'Jacobinism' strikes dreadful and repulsive.

SOCIALISM AND GANDHISM

Socialist orientation of bourgeois democratic revolution impells Roy to dilate upon Gandhi and his philosophy. Socialism and Gandhism are not found compatible. Socialism contradicts the teleological view of the Universe which Gandhism accepts.⁵⁰ However, Roy finds some affinity between Gandhi

47. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?* Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1961, p. 23.

48. Max Eastman, *Marxism, Is it Science?* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1940, p. 114.

49. V. I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Defencism and its Class Significance," *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947, p. 31.

50. M. N. Roy, "Gandhism and Socialism," *Independent India*, Vol. III, No. 4, 1939, p. 65.

and pre-Marxian schools of socialism, dismissed by Marx as social quacks. At best, Gandhism is petty-bourgeois humanitarianism, oscillating between God and man. World is regarded as a pre-determined system in which man is nothing but the expression of universal will. There is universal law, which is not subordinated to human will.⁵¹ This, to Roy, runs counter to the Marxian conception of life and human activity. As Roy sees Marx, man is the creation of the environment in which he lives, but himself being its part, he can influence and change it.

Passing over to the economic aspect, Roy notices similar contrast between the teachings of Gandhi and Marx. The fundamental programme of socialism is the abolition of private property in the means of production. Gandhi agrees with the socialists in condemning the poverty of the masses and their exploitation. He even condemns capitalists though his theory of trusteeship is entirely different from the socialist solution. Roy finds fault with the Gandhian remedy of persuading landlords and capitalists to be kind to the poor. Gandhi's point of departure is the belief that one man is as good as the other, and that all men are essentially good. But Roy thinks otherwise. "A man is good or bad according to the conditions under which one lives. There is no such thing as an immutable human nature".⁵² As long as there are divergent interests to be reconciled, the desire for reconciliation implies that there is antagonism. One cannot change the heart of capitalists. Gandhi attempts to harmonise the interests of capital and labour which cannot be reconciled.

Roy attacks Gandhi's theory of economic welfare, which dwells on simplicity in preference to plenty. It does not mean that socialism is devoid of higher values. On the other hand, material well-being constitutes the basis of intellectual growth and moral development. Man created the machine, which socialism proposes to place at the service of man. Gandhism is so much shocked by the machine civilisation that "it proposes to throw the baby away with the bathwater."⁵³ Gandhism throws

51. Young India, *Selections* Vol. II (1924-26), New York: The Viking Press, 1927, pp. 1078-79.

52. M. N. Roy, *Gandhism, Nationalism, Socialism*, Calcutta : Bengal Radical Club, 1940, p. 64.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

back humanity to primitive forms of production to enable the people to lead simple life. Roy dismisses charkha as "reactionary economics,"⁵⁴ which accounts for Gandhi's failure to come out with an economic programme to win the allegiance of masses, and to make Swaraj intelligible to them.

Roy finds a great gap in the politics of Gandhi and socialism. Socialist politics involves a certain amount of coercion, for "any kind of state is an instrument in the hands of a certain section of society, and the instrument is wielded only for one purpose, namely, the suppression of other classes."⁵⁵ In order to liberate society, the seizure of power by masses is required as the ruling class cannot be persuaded to eliminate themselves. Here, Roy is confronted with Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence. That Roy regarded violent struggle to be essential is clear from his early writings. "The government maintained by violence and brute force cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force."⁵⁶ Though he soft-pedalled his theme in deference to the Gandhian ideal of non-violence, Roy continued to oppose non-violent revolution. "We have repeatedly said and still say that a premature resort to violent tactics may be playing into the hands of the enemy. But it is altogether erroneous to think that there can be such a thing as a 'non-violent revolution', no matter how peculiar and abnormal the situation in India may be. The cult of non-violence is inseparable from an anti-revolutionary spirit. Those who do not want a revolution in India can pin their hope on non-violent methods."⁵⁷ To do justice to Roy, it may be observed that he advocated neither violence nor immorality. Ethically, non-violence may be justifiable but that would not prove its "political effectiveness."⁵⁸ He was opposed to non-violence being made a moral dogma, which compelled "the Congress to waive the right of using all means for attaining Swaraj."⁵⁹ Arbitrary

54. *One Year of Non-Cooperation: From Ahmedabad To Gaya*, Calcutta: Communist Party of India, 1923, p. 57.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

56. *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, I, June 15, 1922, p. 5.

57. *The Advance Guard*, I, December 1, 1922, p. 2.

58. M. N. Roy, *The Alternative*, Bombay: Vora & Co., 1940, p. 10.

59. M. N. Roy, "The Cult of Non-Violence," *Independent India*, Vol. II, No. 30, 1938, p. 469.

limitation of the means pushed the end beyond the realm of realisation. Pure political considerations cannot have much weight for those primarily concerned with an ethical creed.

Going into the juristic aspect of means, Roy finds the legality of the imperialist state, founded upon the right of conquest and act of victorious violence. Since unconditional adherence to the creed of non-violence must have priority over the exigencies of the struggle for freedom, Roy observes that "the cult of non-violence amounts to conformity with imperialist violence."⁶⁰ In its social aspect, it is an instrument of status-quo. It rules out any clash of interest, and if any clash, should it ever break out, was to be regarded as not genuine. The result would be defence of the established order by all means. The great defect of Gandhism is the intrusion of metaphysics into the realm of politics, the confusing of spiritual with temporal aims. Gandhi's non-violence provides moral justification for reactionary social ideals, and exercises veto on the struggle of the masses to attain political and social emancipation. This leads Roy to reject Gandhism from the viewpoint of scientific politics.

Roy lived and worked for the most formative part of his life in the West in the climate of Bolshevik doctrines. That perhaps disabled him to see and evaluate the Gandhian philosophy fully. Both communism and socialism are faced with failure. Communism where it is victorious has ended up in state capitalism and party dictatorship. Socialism has lost its pristine idealism and become only a parliamentary creed. Gandhism offers the third alternative—that of revolution by non-violent mass action.

Gandhism goes beyond the confines of class. Socialism ultimately aims at creating a classless society, but it wishes to make the state all powerful by making the social revolution dependent upon state action. But Gandhism, on that count, proceeds more consistently by making the social process as little dependent upon the state as possible. What is needed is a change of values. Man must wake up to higher nature. Gandhi concedes economic equality as "the master key to non-violent independence,"⁶¹ which he wants to achieve by abolishing con-

60. *Ibid.*, p. 470.

61. *Harijan*, July 3, 1954, p. 141.

flict between capital and labour. Gandhi, however, comes to appreciate the logic of Roy that "a violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good."⁶² The blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialist society in India. Roy may not appreciate it that socialism cannot lead India to the sublime goals of freedom and equality unless it is transferred into Sarvodaya.

SOCIALISM UNDER ECLIPSE

Socialism came under eclipse during Gandhi's ascendancy in Indian politics. Roy himself was driven to a thorough going examination of Marxism as a result of his gradual realisation of its philosophical and ethical deficiencies. While still speaking in terms of class struggle, he began to lay emphasis on the cohesive factor in social organisation. "There is some social interest, which binds classes together. Capitalism grows out of the exploitation of labour, but at the same time, capitalist society raises the entire society on higher level. In so far as the working class is a part of society, in spite of all antagonism and exploitation in the beginning, its interest is identical with that of the capitalists."⁶³ Likewise, while retaining his faith in materialism, Roy started doubting whether Marxism, despite its apparent materialism—was not because of its dialectics, idealistic in core. Marxism, on the whole, is not true to its philosophical tradition. It vulgarises materialism to the extent of denying that basic moral values transcend time and space. With the impersonal concept of the forces of production, it introduces teleology in history, contradicting its own belief that man is the maker in history. Materialism perpetuates the most conspicuous methodological fallacies which Marxism inherited from Hegel. Although the dialectic may give valuable insights into the history of human development, it is not scientific at all. Marx is found guilty of disowning the heritage of mechanistic

62. *Ibid.*

63. Roy, *Scientific Politics*, p. 83.

naturalism. The dialectical approach to unfolding reality rendered Marxism to nominal materialism. As Roy complains, "the point of departure of the Marxist historiography was the mistake of confounding physical urge with economic urge."⁶⁴ The paralysing effect of determinism on human will is comparable only to the impact of the doctrine of pre-destination on the orthodox Hindu mind. Roy expects too much from Marx. It would be unfair to blame Marx for having failed to solve a problem which is insoluble, but with which human situation continually confronts everyone. Mankind live in a world that is governed by laws, and at the same time everyone believes that within their framework, the man possesses freedom of choice. But precisely how far these laws restrict human freedom, or how far this freedom enables one to modify their operation, one cannot tell nor one expect Marx to do so.

Roy is found rejecting Marxian view of monistic historical development. The social relations which form the subject matter of history are, in fact, far too complex to be determined by any single cause. The materialistic conception of history must recognise the creative role of intelligence and objective reality of ideas. Priority belongs to the physical being, to matter. But once the biologically determined process of ideation is completed and ideas are formed, they continue to have an autonomous existence, an evolutionary process of their own. It is, therefore, possible to be materialist and accept a plural theory of causation, and it is equally possible to be a scientific materialist without being a Marxist. Roy places himself in this position.

Roy deviates from early convictions by criticising Marx for his moral relativism, and failure to realise that there is something that is stable and permanent in human nature. Two elements gave Roy's revisionism its particular form : one was its empiricism, the other is its keen interest in naturalist ethics. Herein lies the difference between Roy and Bernstein. All the inconvenient facts which Bernstein adduced could have been answered within Marxist framework. This was not the case with Roy. In running down Marx, Roy ignores the fact that socialist ethics represent the concrete human situation. It is

64. *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. II, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1955, p. 217.

an ethics which is rooted in demands, not in institution, and which rejects every transcendent elements. The central error of present day Marxists is not their relative ethics as suggested by Roy, but their attempt to set up by any and every means a planned Absolute of social justice. One does well to strive after justice. Yet in an imperfect world, one can never hope to reach more than an approximation to it, and if this presumption goes farther all one is likely to achieve is a greater injustice. Roy, while upholding the absolute standard, falls into the same error as Marx.

Next, Roy directs his attack on Marx's utopia, and dismisses the 'the withering of the state' as a part of Marx's romantic irrationalism.⁶⁵ Here, Roy fails to take a balanced view of Marxism. It serves as the point of departure for the entire Marxist theory of alienation, the theory which seeks to explain the processes by which mankind has drifted further and further away from original state of innocence. Marx centred his critique on different aspects of modern living, and the political conclusions he drew were entirely opposed to anything offered by romantics. But like them, he came to the general conclusion that modern civilisation was anti-human or inhuman, that it was unworthy of man's inherent qualities and potentialities. Man, according to the Marxist view, no longer moves in the natural environment which was familiar to the primitive tribe. He has created barriers between himself and nature. Man's growing mastery over the forces of nature goes hand in hand with the development of the class-struggle. This class-structure creates, as it were, a second nature. What Marx means to say is that exploitative relationships are not natural but are creations of mankind itself, by-products of the growth of civilisation, features of alienation. Marxism claims that it has uncovered in bourgeois society not only elements of disintegration but also constructive features that provide for a better future. Socialism would mean the abolition of commodity production. The entire superstructure, which is, after all, only a product of class antagonism, would wither away. The state would dry up, as it were, since there would be no more class struggle that might

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-249.

express itself in a political power struggle. Where Marx erred was his assertion on socialism as inevitable, he confounded probability with certainty. Marx was trapped in the same fallacy which characterises the theory of evolution. He tended to take the inevitability of progress for granted. This does not justify Roy's accusation of irrationalism against Marx.

It would be seen that as Roy started his searching scrutiny of Marxism, he came to realise how far away was his own philosophical position. Almost every aspect of Marxian system is disowned. This includes even his rejection of democratic socialism, for he finds every form of collectivism as inadequate for creating that society which gives the greatest measure of freedom. Democratic socialism is written off as contradiction in terms. "If democratic-socialists come to power anywhere, either their socialism or their democracy will go by the board."⁶⁶ Socialism, being wedded to class-struggle, cannot get away from the inevitable clash and violent revolution. Roy is ahead of Lenin, who approaches democracy in terms of stages from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to socialism.

The question of compatibility of democracy and socialism is an open one. There is good reason to believe that it is not necessary to go all the way along the totalitarian road if a majority should be bent on carrying through socialism, although certain modifications in the process of economic legislation and administration will be necessary. If Roy is correct that democratic socialism is impossible, then those many people in India who ardently want socialism would have no choice but to abandon democracy. This is the reason why serious attention should be given to the problem. There is real danger that in a critical situation, the masses will abandon democracy in favour of socialist dictatorship unless they are satisfied that it is possible to establish and maintain socialism through democratic means, and unless institutional devices, apt to make democratic socialism workable without the wholesale abolition of the guarantees of human rights, have been prepared in advance. Roy fails to lead in this direction.

Roy overlooks some important factors leading to the growth

66. M. N. Roy, "Democratic Socialism," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XXIII, Nos. 40-42, 1959, p. 482.

of socialist movement in India, where it developed as part of freedom struggle. The common basis was anti-colonialism and the desire for political independence. In addition, the combination of socialism with nationalism was made easier by the existence of large foreign investments, which blurred distinction between opposition to colonialism and opposition to capitalism. Nationalisation was, therefore, readily accepted : hence the prevalence of socialist ideas. The association of socialists with the freedom struggle had an important consequence. Nationalism, which might in theory be regarded as a departure from socialist internationalism, in practice helped the socialists to escape from the embrace of the communists, and it was on this issue of subordination to Moscow that they parted company. This involved a re-examination of their ideological position, in the process of which they moved progressively from Marxism, and abandoned the doctrine of violent revolution in favour of peaceful methods. Thus, democratic socialism struck its roots in Indian politics.

Nevertheless, democratic socialism is overshadowed by the double threat of nuclear diplomacy and the welfare state. Nuclear diplomacy has monopolised human attention and engrossed best talents, confounded old-fashioned notions of exploitation, and made preoccupations with matters, social and economic, seem trivial. When life is at stake, what social theorists concentrate on the standard of living, and even the quality of life ? On the other hand, the welfare state may be less horrifying than bomb, but it is also more insidious. It suggests, although it has not proved, that it may be possible to have the socialist benefits without socialism. Unemployment insurance, national health services, managed economy are now part of conservative platform. Thunder from the left has not been precisely stolen, but it appears to be on permanent loan.

The dilemma of democratic socialism is a dilemma of power. Roy appears to be overwhelmed by it. After discarding communism, Roy did not want to earn the dubious reputation of being dubbed as "a bastard of Karl Marx"⁶⁷ by owning democratic socialism. Socialism gets eclipsed at the hands of one, who once fathered its growth and development in India.

67. *Politics, Power And Parties*, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1960, p. 224.

CHAPTER III

RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIAN POLITY

Evolution in Roy's ideas unfolds his thoughts on reconstruction of Indian Polity. It covers a wide sweep, providing insight to the basis and structure of state, Roy envisioned for free India. There was a inner thread uniting all the different stages. This unity was supplied by his urge for freedom.

PROCESS OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING

In his early phase, Roy held radical views on the constitution, which implied the responsibility of building a new state after the established state had been subverted and overthrown. This revolutionary process, Roy wanted to apply to the making of Indian Constitution. "Law perhaps has contributed more to the development of subversive ideas than another branch of study."¹ Referring to the English Constitution, Roy observes that it was not a spirit of legalist conformism but resistance that contributed to its development. "A successful revolutionary struggle is the condition for the framing of any constitution which would establish real democracy, that is, the sovereignty of the people."² In other words, constitutions are written on a successful assertion of the right to revolt. Resistance to the established system is lawful under certain conditions, which preserve exploitative system of social and political relations. Roy envisaged the emergence of Indian Constitution through revolutionary process.

The Indian Constitution, according to Roy, should be based on the principle that the supreme power rests with the people. How could that be asserted without challenging the authority of Britain in India? "The sovereignty of the Crown in India may be a fiction, but it was defended by a real power, the imperia-

1. M. N. Roy, "How Constitutions are Made?," *Independent India*, Vol. III, No. 33, 1939, p. 522.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 523.

list state in India.”³ In order to frame the Constitution of free India, Roy found it necessary to eliminate that power. He was struck by the idea of Constituent Assembly as the most effective means to achieve it. M. N. Roy was the first Indian, who caught the idea of Constituent Assembly in 1928 as “the instrument for the assertion of India’s right to self-determination.”⁴ The idea of the Constituent Assembly, therefore, represented the determination of the Indian people to create an organ of power, which they could not exercise so long as that power was claimed by external authority. Roy made Constituent Assembly inherent in the idea of Swaraj. It was disputing the authority of British Parliament while setting up an alternative authority. Influenced by Roy, the Indian National Congress in a resolution of the annual session of 1934, declared that the only satisfactory solution to the problem of Indian freedom was “a Constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on a basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible.”⁵ Thereafter the demand was reiterated with mounting insistence. The exigencies of Second World War forced Britain to accept in principle, the Indian demand for Constituent Assembly. The acceptance was first expressed in a half-hearted and ambiguous manner in August (1940) offer, declaring that the framing of a constitutional scheme should primarily be the responsibility of Indians themselves. This equivocal declaration was, at any rate, a departure from the position hitherto taken by Britain, that the right to formulate constitutional scheme for India rested with the British Parliament. It was through the Cripps Offer (1942) that Britain clearly recognised the Indian demand by providing an elected Constitution-making body for India after the war. The recognition was re-stated in all subsequent authoritative statements of British policy towards India. As provided for in the Cabinet Mission Plan, the Constituent Assembly came into being in November, 1946.

Roy had in mind the instance of America, and the experi-

3. *Ibid.*, p. 539.

4. “On the Constituent Assembly,” *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 6, 1940, p. 65.

5. D. Chakrabarty and C. Bhattacharyya, *Congress in Evolution*, Calcutta : Calcutta Book Co., 1940, p. 30.

ence of the Great French Revolution, which created the tradition of a Constituent Assembly as the proper authority to frame a new constitution, and from it, he drew a lesson that "a Constituent Assembly is the creation of a people in revolt," and "a new constitution can be enforced only by overthrowing the established state."⁶ It was Roy's belief that an assembly permitted by the laws of established state could never make a law which would nullify its legal validity. But later on, Roy moved away from this idea to state that "an act of the British Parliament is necessary for transferring power to the Indian people."⁷ This did not mean imposing a constitution on India, but extending a helping hand to the Indian people.

No doubt, Roy gives evidence of Locke's influence in upholding people's right to resist, but he ignores the other side that the constitution-making process in the colonies provides an example of difference between de facto and de jure. The Statute of Westminster of 1931, in surrendering the British Parliament's legal right to legislate for the Dominions without their assent, was only a confirmation of what had come about by usage and convention. The British Parliament was merely giving away de jure a power it had long ceased to possess de facto. The moral of this applied to India. The application of revolutionary process to constitution became redundant. Roy also failed to read the liberal intentions of British statesmen who were quite ready to acknowledge that in the long run, Indian self-government and even independence was inevitable. The British proved amenable to conscience. Though they did not satisfy the nationalist demands, yet they did not wholly thwart them. The freedom-struggle was rewarded with gradual progress to Swaraj. Since the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909, the aim of the British Government had been the progressive devolution of responsibility for administration to the people of India. Thus radicalism had little chance to flourish, and a revolutionary concept of Roy's Constituent Assembly could not inspire overwhelming mass enthusiasm.

6. "On the Constituent Assembly," *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 10, 1940, p. 114.

7. *Constitution of Free India*, 2nd impression, Delhi: Radical Democratic Party, 1945, p. 3.

Roy's treatment fails to present an objective picture. Constitutions are intended to serve as the basis for the realisation of established values, they are not devoid of a desire to create new system for securing justice and freedom. The changes desired may be no more than moderate reforms. They may also be so extensive as to entail, in principle, if not in the event, a revolution. It was ironic that some of the men, who most aggressively repudiated this dynamic conception of constitutional process were the same people, who presided over the adoption of the Indian Constitution embodying the spirit of liberalism. Revolution by consent sounds like a contradiction in itself, yet the transfer of power to Indians in 1947 proved that it is possible to effect fundamental political change without bloodshed. Roy veered around this idea quite late in life.

Roy appears to be more concerned with the content of the constitution. The foundation of the imperialist state in India was the economic exploitation of the masses by foreign capital. If it were replaced by a state exploited by a native minority, Roy feared that India would "not be a democratic state" though "formally a free country."⁸ The object of India should be not to maintain the social status quo, but to replace it by a new set of liberating and progressive relations, which find expression in Roy's Jacobinist reconstruction of the country.

JACOBINIST RECONSTRUCTION

"Even during his Marxist phase, Roy ruled out reconstruction of Indian polity on socialist principles for the simple reason that India was "not yet ripe for Bolshevism."⁹ She must evolve through the stage of bourgeois democracy to reach the socialist goal. This was in consonance with Marxist theory, which when applied to the problems of bourgeois democratic revolution is called Jacobinism. It was Roy's conviction that once the reconstruction began with a Jacobinist programme, the tendency towards a direct development to socialism, which was inherent in Jacobinism, would most probably prevail in India.

8. "On the Constituent Assembly," *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 8, 1940, p. 89.

9. *The Aftermath of Non-cooperation*, p. 89.

Working out the details of Jacobinist reconstruction, Roy insists upon the conquest of state power by the people so that it becomes easier for the government to remove all obstacles to national prosperity. This can result only from rapid growth of modern industry, and from the introduction of measures which "will guarantee the cultivator of land inalienable possession of the entire produce of his labour minus a specified contribution to the national exchequer."¹⁰ Roy also advocates abolition of all privileges and institutions which militate against the establishment of democratic freedom, and constitute unnecessary burden on national economy, and, are antagonistic to general welfare. He, therefore, recommends measures which will transform hoarded wealth into productive capital for expanding production.

The revolutionisation of the established social relations is a condition for real national freedom, progress and prosperity. This leads Roy to advocate nationalisation of railways, mines, waterways, telegraph etc.¹¹ Development of modern industries with state aid, protective labour legislation with recognition of unions and right to strike, workers' councils in industries, profit sharing in all big industries, free and compulsory education, separation of state and religion, full social, economic and political rights for women, are included by Roy in the programme of Jacobinist reconstruction.

It is important to note that Roy as a Marxist, stood for "a centralised national state," which, based on universal suffrage, was "the only way to national solidarity."¹² The doctrine of decentralisation on the basis of linguistic and communal demarcations was found injurious. He rested his faith on the economic development which destroyed all regional differences and social prejudices. However, Roy laid emphasis on the importance of villages, which should be so constituted as to become basic units of the state. This would save the individual from becoming social atoms. At the same time, Roy was quite clear that a national state could not be built on "the foundation of a social

10. M. N. Roy, "The Constitutional Deadlock, What Next ", *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1937, p. 7.

11. *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*, p. 83.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

organism still greatly dominated by feudal traditions, patriarchal conservation and religious superstition.”¹³ Subsequently, Roy moved away from the idea of unitary government. In a manifesto issued by him in 1930 soon after the Lahore Congress, he gave an outline of the programme of national reconstruction, in which he envisaged the “establishment of Federal Republic of India with an advanced constitution, the executive being fully responsible to a single-chamber parliament elected by universal suffrage.”¹⁴ The constituent units in the Indian Federation would enjoy full autonomy, which would ensure the growth of national unity through diversity.

Economic reconstruction of India was to be on the basis of planned economy. So long as private property remains the foundation of economic system, the idea of economic planning is excluded. The condition for planned economy is, if not the complete abolition of private property in means of production, yet a large measure of state control of the economic life. Roy laid down three conditions for the normal economic development of India : (1) accumulation of wealth which could be converted into capital; (2) a sufficiently large amount of labour available for the purpose, and (3) internal market.¹⁵ The first two conditions existed in India, but the third did not exist for want of purchasing power among the people. The revolutionary democratic state must acquire power to banish low standard of living to execute the welfare of the people. Only then, it would be possible to plan the economic development of India.

Roy rejects Gandhian economy, and finds it incompatible with the developmental needs of India. Charkha is ridiculed as wasteful employment of labour. “The miraculous power of the holy wheel is a myth. The charkha is the god of economic ignorance—it is the emblem of social stagnation.”¹⁶ The Gandhian economy fails to solve the basic problem of India’s economic life, the problem of poverty. Poverty could not be cured

13. *India in Transition*, pp. 177-178.

14. “The Lessons of Lahore Congress,” *Independent India*, Vol. III, No. 10-11, 1939, p. 162.

15. M. N. Roy, “Economic Planning,” *Independent India*, Vol. III, No. 39, 1939, p. 612.

16. M. N. Roy, “Tiny Gods,” *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 5, 1940, p. 57.

without a proper system of distribution. The problem could be solved by planning production to equate with human demand.

Roy assigns big role to the state in financing the programme of economic development through the creation of credit. Pending the creation of heavy industries, agriculture would remain the basic industry. Without mechanisation, agricultural productivity could not be substantially increased. This could be facilitated by starting "state-farms all over the country."¹⁷ Roy made collective farming the central idea of planned agricultural production. Collectivism, however, would be voluntary, peasants remaining legal owners of their share of total produce, commensurate with land and labour, contributed by each to the pool.

Roy's insistence on planned reconstruction of Indian economy runs counter to the spirit of Jacobinism. Despite best of intentions, Roy may find it difficult to save his people's plan from degenerating into professional plan. The working of various plans in India reveals the hand of professional economists and of a group very near the top of political and administrative life. Roy ignores the reality that the very genesis of planning tends to operate at the top for the bottom. A flow from the bottom can scarcely exist on any significant scale in a country where more than eighty per cent of the population is illiterate, where an even larger number may be only remotely concerned with the development plan—to say nothing of a land where higher authority is traditionally accepted.

Roy may be reminded that human conscience cannot be harmonised with collective demands of organisation for power. Economic planning has by no means reached the stage of perfection. The pressure for collective plans and order can only succeed if the individual is prepared to cease speaking for himself and to forgo personal responsibility. One thing seems to be certain that in individual man, the feeling for freedom cannot be separated from the consciousness of responsibility, while agglomerating socio-economic decisions, less and less can be sensed of this link. Thus, one finds Roy's planned economy

17. M. N. Roy, *People's Plan For Economic Development Of India*, Delhi : Indian Federation of Labour, 1944, p. 15.

leading India into the thralldom of state feudalism, sweeping along with the Jacobinist ideal of building a democratic state.

Roy is harsh in his attempt to play down the Gandhian economy, which strives to raise the level of society by leading it to the path of "common good,"¹⁸ and thus emerges as the *modus operandi* of ideal democracy. It is an effort to recast the present social order so as to eliminate exploitation and injustice, and to revive and refine the nation's creative genius by a voluntary regress to simplicity and naturalness. Decentralised cottage industry and *swadeshi* contribute towards the growth of self-sufficient economy. The bewildering complexity of life resulting from advances in machine mastery has made understanding and self-control progressively difficult. Thus materialism has spelt moral ruin. Gandhi was quite aware of poverty and exploitation. Non-violence and the related principle of non-possession rule out exploitation. In this sense, Gandhi stood for spiritual socialism. Gandhi's bias for cottage industry did not lead him to oppose nationalisation of the indispensable large-scale production. Roy does injustice to Gandhi by confusing simplicity with poverty. Gandhian economy simply condemns the moral lag which expresses itself in man's inordinate love of wealth and power.

THE RADICAL DEMOCRATIC STATE

The experience of Russian Revolution, and its failure to accomplish the task of human freedom, made Roy serious to suggest the feasibility of a suitable political system for India. Roy's draft constitution for free India gives concrete expression to a general social and political theory which claims to diagnose and provide a remedy for all ills like poverty, ignorance and inequality. This it is claimed is the democratic alternative to paternalism, whether of the right or of the left. It is the only way yet suggested to make democracy work in an illiterate country. The method is called "organised democracy,"¹⁹ and the basic institution is the people's committee. The polity established is the Radical Democratic State, which is intended to

18. *Harijan*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

19. Roy, *Constitution of Free India*, p. 5.

function as the instrument for the exercise of popular sovereignty.

The spirit of Roy's draft is indicated by its Declaration of Rights and Fundamental Principles and its chapter on the Economic Organisation of Society.²⁰ The supreme power rests with the people, and shall be exercised through the control of the executive and legislative functions of the state by elected representatives. The people possess the inalienable right to alter and modify the political organisation. Autonomous provinces, formed on lingual and cultural basis, shall form the Federal Union of India. All territorial units shall have a uniformly democratic constitution. Land and underground riches are the collective property of the people. Basic industries and the credit system shall be subject to state control. Cultivators are entitled to hold land subject to the payment of unitary land tax. The state shall promote large-scale co-operative agriculture through the supply of modern machinery and cheap credit. An irreducible standard of living for all working in the fields, factories, mines shall be guaranteed by minimum statutory wages. Adequate remunerative employment or relief is a right of a citizen. No body shall labour for more than eight hours a day for six days a week, and every worker shall be entitled to one month's leave with full pay every year, and women workers to three months' paid maternity leave. There shall be statutory provision of social security for the old, sick and infirm. Education upto the age of fourteen shall be free, compulsory and secular.

Roy also guarantees freedom of speech and press. The right of association for safeguarding the economic conditions and political status of workers and toiling masses is assured. All citizens will enjoy inviolability of their person; no one shall be placed under arrest except by order of a legally constituted court. Integrity of home and privacy will not be violated. Citizens shall have full freedom of worship. There shall be identical rights and obligations for men and women. Rights of minorities shall be protected by proportional representation on all economic bodies.

Roy pledges the state to reorganise the economy of the

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

country so as to guarantee to every citizen all the material requirements for civilised existence and also adequate leisure for cultivating the finer aspects of life. It is the function of the state to plan production and regulate distribution to that end. The planning authority is constituted by the Supreme People's Council. It will take over land, mineral wealth and railways. It can fix prices, wages and rates of return on private investment. Subject to the general principle that production is for use, freedom of enterprise, individual and collective, is guaranteed.

The sovereign democratic power expresses itself through people's committees in villages, towns and cities. The number of members of a people's committee will be one-fiftieth of the electorate. The people's committees nominate candidates for election to the provincial bodies and the Federal Assembly, and give constant expression to the will of the people for the guidance of elected representatives, and on proposed legislation. They can initiate legislation, demand a referendum, and recommend recall of representatives, provincial governors, and the Governor-General.

The provincial people's councils give their opinion on matters in dispute between the province and the Centre. One third of them can require dissolution of the provincial people's councils. If the provincial people's council decides by a majority, and is upheld in a referendum by a majority of electorates, the province can stand out of the Federation.²¹ It can secede at any later time by the same procedure.

The Federation is governed by a Supreme People's Council, the Governor-General, the Council of State, and the Federal Assembly. The Governor-General is elected for five years directly by adult suffrage. He will function as the constitutional head of the state, and if he rejects the advice of the Prime Minister, he must seek the concurrence of the federal legislature and abide by its decision.

While the Federal Assembly is elected for four years, the Council of State is for six years. Legislation is first considered by the Council of State, and even if it disapproves, it may be passed by the Assembly, but all acts must be ratified by the Supreme

21. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

People's Council. The Federal Assembly may legislate on all matters, and its legislation on defence, foreign affairs, external trade, customs, currency, post and telegraph, railway, shipping and air are binding on the provinces. On other subjects, the provincial people's council may object, and the matter be referred to federal referendum. Provincial legislation can be vetoed by the Supreme People's Council on the advice of the Governor-General or Council of Ministers.

The independence of the judiciary is obtained in the usual way. The Federal Chief Justice is appointed by the Governor-General, and other judges in consultation with him. They cannot be dismissed except with the previous sanction of the Supreme People's Council. Similar is the case with the provincial High Courts.

Roy's blueprint of the Radical Democratic State is concerned to provide the conditions for rapid progress towards equality for all the underprivileged, and aiming, therefore, at the elimination of caste and other such differences. As a transitional measure, Roy was willing to support special safeguards for the backward classes. However, solution of the minority problem is but incidental to the main purpose, which is to provide the framework of a society in which economic advance could be rapid, equality of opportunity and of standards could be approached quickly, and at the same time democracy would prevail and individual freedom be preserved.

The political structure is highly democratic. Though Roy follows the original Soviet plan in its people's committees with their right of recall, yet he checks the tendency of tiers of indirectly elected Soviets to become petrified and remote from the electorate by minimising the number of tiers and combining them with direct election of the Governor-General, the provincial governors and provincial people's councils. The lowest people's councils are very close to the rank and file as they number one in fifty of the adult population, and are elected annually. They participate continually in working of the government, and have the right of initiative. The referendum is much used. Paid holidays on election days are provisions to enable the poor to pull their full weight. It would be difficult to pervert this democratic system to the interests of the privileged, or to establish within, the familiar party dictatorship.

This is rendered difficult further by the safeguards for the liberty of the individual.

These are of the usual type, and Roy, no doubt, could make it more rigorous in a complete draft. But it is a matter of experience that constitutional provisions for the freedom of the individual are of little value. The executive can always get round them : what deters it is its own conviction that freedom is important, and still more its fear of public reaction. Ultimately, it is the public feeling in the matter that preserves public liberties.

Roy betrays ignorance of the evils of popular government while advocating a radical democratic polity for India. Popular leadership declines because it listens to the unintelligent masses, and thus descends to the dead level of commonplace opinion. Roy's organised democracy in being the government of the state by all, assumes that *Demos* makes up its mind in the same manner as an individual, but this assumption is false, for *Demos* merely accepts the opinion given by the leaders who cater to the level of mass intelligence. Moreover, in an era of growing social complexity, the need for special knowledge is requisite for the successful control of government, and democracy by its worship of the average, makes such deference of the specialist impossible. Most of the problems of modern governments are composite and complex, and have to be dealt with by the few, who later mould the vague feelings of the many who have not the equipment, facts, or time to deal directly with the problems themselves. To talk of democracy as the sole factor in government is inconceivable because it is always coupled with another principle, oligarchy. Neither of these two alone gives government. There must be the combination. No doubt, in politics, the reality of popular government depend upon the working responses to popular demands—as Roy envisages. Yet, those responses, in the very nature of the process, can hardly ever be fully satisfactory to any body. But they can be roughly responsive to the complex of the most of the diverse citizen influences. In the long run, as they are successively modified in the light of experience, they also become responsive.

Roy's radical democracy must also face self-interest and irresponsibility of power, both of which underlie its major problems. In its fight against these dangers, democracy has power-

ful weapons, but they may not be active in a country like India. The question of giving popular character to democracy is centred in the problem whether man is increasing in wisdom, for while no government gives so much to the citizen as does Roy's radical democracy. At the same time, no government demands so much. Its successful operation depends upon the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, for efficient participation of individuals in group affair directly necessitates a factual basis of activity, of which an average Indian is not capable at the present level of intellectual development.

Roy overlooks the danger which lies in simplifying the problems of good government. In the last analysis, the type of political structure is only of secondary importance. It is not difficult to see why the people's committees are not just open to perversion as the parliamentary system. It is just as liable to be misapplied by windbags or by the stupidity of the masses. As far as the bulk of the population is concerned, in ordinary times, a change of political structure is of little avail. A demagogue can hoodwink a people's committee as easily as he can a legislative assembly. There is no reason to believe that Roy's people's committees would not function as carbon copy of local-self government and retain its shortcomings. If early expectations of the value of local government as a school of political education have not been fulfilled, hopes, raised by Roy's people's committees, are not going to be realised.

Roy's proposals bristle with so many other difficulties. The system of annually electing the people's committees would discourage talent from offering itself for election. The practice of recall has not worked well generally. Referendum on legislation would usher legislative anarchy. The system of proportional representation, instead of satisfying minority, would put premium on the mushroom growth of political parties. There would be no stability for the executive, and the people's committee would remain divided. Worse still, both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister in Roy's radical democracy, would be powerful functionaries, and there would always be occasions of a clash or deadlock, leading to the paralysis of authority.

Roy's federal constitution, retaining national unity, permits the provinces to stand out of the Union. It bears close resem-

blance with other compromise schemes, made popular by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to resolve the constitutional deadlock in the country. The federal structure of Roy's radical democratic state represented middle approach between the demands of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. As a 'Golden Mean' in Indian politics, it was the only feasible alternative to partition.

CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

As Roy veered round the philosophy of New Humanism, he came to approach the radical democratic state in terms of co-operative commonwealth. Repulsed at the spectre of monolithic state, Roy applied his mind in search of "co-operative social relationships,"²² to ensure the development of individual potentialities. The problem was to reconcile the concept of direct democracy with the ideal of co-operative state. Roy was optimistic about it. Even in large political units and highly complex social organisations of the modern world, direct democracy will be possible in the form of a network of small co-operative commonwealths."²³ This is achieved by transforming local community into co-operative republic, and by creating these small islands of democracy, the nucleus of a democratic society will be created.

Roy envisages its evolution through voluntary efforts. Local democracies will be in existence as a political reality, and give the impress of their structure on the state as a whole. The idea is based on the co-operative aspect of human nature. Co-operative social relationships were established in history to reinforce the struggle for existence, which the primitive man had undertaken as an individual. With the passage of time, co-operation became quest for freedom. If man is selfish, he is also enlightened for which he works out his way towards cohesion and harmony. The rise of Leviathan does not destroy this basic instinct in the man. The tendency towards mutual aid

22. M. N. Roy, *New Humanism*, 2nd revised ed., Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1953.

23. M. N. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, New Delhi; Eastern Economist, 1952, p. 27.

and support has so many manifestations under an infinite variety of aspects. In its political aspect, it finds expression in the state. Roy is not an anarchist but he hopes that the co-operative commonwealth will cease to be an instrument of coercion. Its functions will be subject to enlightened public opinion and intelligent public actions. Roy rules the emergence of authoritarian polity in the atmosphere of individual initiative and co-operation.

In India, the success of co-operative commonwealth largely rests on the evolution of democratic spirit, which in turn demands education of the people. However, Roy is opposed to state-managed education as it creates "a high degree of conformism and subservience to an established order."²⁴ Education for democracy consists in making the people conscious of their right to exist as human beings in decency and dignity. It helps them to think, and to exercise their rational judgment. In order to achieve greater freedom, the desire for a democratic system must be awakened in a growing number of individuals. In the absence of such education in India, universal suffrage means a large number of ignorant voters, who can easily be swayed by appeals to emotions, religious prejudices and primitive sentiments. Democracy may fail to function in the atmosphere of social and cultural backwardness. Roy's education teaches people to imbibe co-operative spirit and practise democratic politics.

Roy's new polity visualises a form of economic organisation to which he gives the name "co-operative economy," but it is not to be compared with co-operatives existing at present. Roy's co-operatives are not subsidiaries to capitalist economy to mitigate some of its evils. Co-operative commonwealth pre-supposes economic reorganisation of society so as to eliminate the possibility of exploitation. Roy wants to ensure economic security without forging new chains. "Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former."²⁵ The competitive economy of capitalism and the collective economy under socialism are found inadequate by Roy to solve the problem. Human

24. *Politics, Power and Parties*, pp. 118-119.

25. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 59.

nature being co-operative and society having been a co-operative organisation, he applauds co-operative economy as the restoration of original relations. It retains all the benefits of technology while avoiding its evils.

The issue of nationalisation becomes redundant in co-operative economy. "A co-operative system embracing the entire national economy will, by its very structure, eliminate exploitation of labour for private profit," but at the same time, "no body will be expropriated or otherwise injured."²⁶ In the co-operatives, both production and distribution would be done through co-operatives. The size of production units would be limited so that they might be managed by those who work with them. Roy claims that it will be really socialist economy without the evils of regimentation. Financial assistance by the state in the beginning should not mean state control or state interference. The economic organisation of society will be one of its various constituent institutions, each making a specific contribution to general progress.

Will co-operative economy be a planned economy? Roy is not opposed to planning, but he insists on the widest diffusion of the planning machinery and its democratic control. The people, organised locally, must be given full opportunity to formulate and also to execute the plan. That would reconcile planning with freedom. Roy does not permit individual freedom to be jeopardised by consideration of technical efficiency. If modern technological trends preclude such reconciliation, Roy would like to curb and make them amenable to human welfare. Machine should subserve man's purpose, and contribute to his freedom.

This leads Roy to rule out the method of building up heavy industries as a means to raise the standard of living of the people in India. His emphasis is on agriculture, whose recognition and development as "the foundation of a healthy rational modern economy stands a greater chance than any other method to succeed in removing the poverty of the Indian people."²⁷ Being aware of the main handicaps of Indian agri-

26. M. N. Roy, "Plea For Realist Economy", *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 13, 1950, p. 152.

27. *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 157.

culture, an improved irrigation system is the major need. Fertility of the land needs to be maintained and increased. The countryside needs many new roads, and improvement and repairs of the existing one. Also rural consumers and subsidiary industries can be organised on a small scale on co-operative basis to provide employment. While advocating rural co-operatives, Roy makes it quite clear that the initiative has to come from the peasant themselves, and co-operative organisation should never go to an extent beyond what they are voluntarily prepared for. The local co-operatives will in no sense be autarchic. They will be interdependent and integrated in a larger co-operative community.

The co-operative economic and political structure eliminates concentration of power. The function of the state will be reduced to co-ordination of the activities of other autonomous institutions. The aim of democratic politics is to build up a state based upon popular initiative, social co-operation and increasing participation of the people in the administration of all public affairs. The index of democratic development is the minimisation of state coercion, and the maximisation of voluntary co-operation of the people in administration and legislation.

Roy gives the impression that co-operative commonwealth represents break with socialism. That is not so. Co-operation helps socialism for creating "subordination to the common interests that was formerly the stumbling block for very many socialists."²⁸ Admitting that co-operation is not yet the building of socialist society, Lenin still maintained that "it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building."²⁹ He finds in co-operative operations a period of cultural development through which the entire people must go to reach socialism. Concessions excluded, co-operation very often entirely coincide with socialism. Since Indian conditions are not very much different from those prevailing in Russia on the eve of Bolshevik Revolution, cooperation is suited to the level of the ordinary peasant in that it does not demand anything higher of him. Co-operation eventually contributes to the emergence of collective spirit.

28. Lenin, "On Co-operation," *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 830.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 831.

among people. Roy's co-operative commonwealth is, thus, found in state of dangerous drift towards socialism.

In their actual working, Roy may find it difficult to save his co-operatives from paternalism and government leading strings. The co-operative movement does not operate in a vacuum. It is part of an ordered society and an ordered state. The state impinges upon it at many points. The working of co-operative movement in India reveals the trend towards increased officialisation, which is inimical to the co-operative ideal. Co-operation as a people's movement and its management and control by government cannot go together. Official nature is not the ideal method of sustaining a co-operative movement, but in the Indian context the choice will be between a government initiated and government fostered effort, and leaving the impoverished people without the alleviation of their sufferings which most agree, co-operation can bring about.

What has, however, been imperfectly realised by Roy is the vast responsibility which the underwriting of the co-operative effort involves and implies. Co-operation requires concerted effort by the members of the group to improve their own and each other's condition. The recognition of the need by the prospective beneficiaries of the effort should come first, then the realisation that co-operation offers a way to meet it, and finally the taking of necessary steps. Anyone who wants to see an approach to the co-operative commonwealth, must see to it that co-operation continually adopts itself to the changing demands of the public. The lack of spontaneity in the Indian co-operative movement is admittedly one of its greatest inherent weakness, however unavoidable in the circumstances. As is obvious, a society of enlightened co-operators will require a congenial cultural moral atmosphere, in which the people will conscientiously and deliberately work to achieve greater equality and freedom. But, unfortunately, the atmosphere which prevails today in India is the least suitable for Roy's co-operative commonwealth.

Roy invites disintegration for his over-emphasis on the autonomy of the local republics in the Indian polity. To any student of government, one thing that impresses is the almost irresistible tendency towards centralisation, which is necessitated by the modern economic system and the necessity of planning.

Political decentralisation may give rise to the growth of panchayat raj, which, however laudable, may come under the influence of local tyrants. It has increased and formalised the control of Congressmen over patronage and administration in district politics, and has made it difficult for an opposition party to transform voting power into political power in the district. Indian villages are already faction-ridden, and the introduction of panchayati raj has intensified the evil. Factionalism often tends to lead to the paralysis of local institutions of self-government and co-operation. Roy also ignores the problem of national defence. The co-operative commonwealth cannot exist without the penumbra of security. With hostile China and Pakistan as her neighbours, India, if she adopts such a system, would fall an easy prey to the aggression.

Whether Republic of India comes to the measurement of Roy's Co-operative Commonwealth or not, the main point to be emphasised is that it is in itself a signal achievement of Indian Polity that it has, over a relatively short period, acquired definable shape and form—stability not in the sense of a stationary state but in the sense of regulated movement. The very system condemned by Roy, has given assurance and general direction of development to Indian Polity. India has been given coherence and shape by the character of three elements, a machinery of government, a one-dominant party system and a parliamentary constitutionalism. These three elements represent the institutions, which tend to ensure that change is at once about as fast as society can bear and at the same time as sure as man can make it. When a-prior arguments of doubtful validity like those of Roy, are replaced by an examination of the actual factors at work, it is difficult not to conclude that India, if left alone, will continue to have a political complexion not very different from that of the present.

ROY, GANDHI AND JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN

The study of Roy's treatment of Indian Polity and its reconstruction in relation to Gandhi and Jaya Prakash Narayan may be found quite rewarding. Though he ruled out of question a detailed delineation of the new order, Gandhi often tried to indicate roughly the broad lines of the kind of society he

aimed at. Gandhi as a philosophical anarchist, repudiates the state on historical, ethical and economic bases. The state represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned away from violence to which it owes its very existence. But, for Roy, state becomes an instrument of coercion only when power is concentrated in the hands of any minority or any section. Again, the ideal society, according to Gandhi, is the stateless democracy, the state of enlightened anarchy, where social life has become so perfect as to be self-regulated. "In the ideal, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state."³⁰ But in the opinion of Roy, "the ideal of a stateless society is obviously an absurd utopia."³¹ He is opposed to the monolithic state but retains it in decentralised democracy where it will become co-terminus with society, and hence will cease to be an instrument of coercion. However, Gandhi veers round Roy, when he refers to the democratic rural communities, having full powers, capable of managing its own affairs. The ideal democracy will be a federation of self-sufficing and self-governing communities. In the case of Roy, life will be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom, but, for Gandhi, it will be an oceanic circle. The out-most circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within, and derive its own strength from it.

Gandhi like Roy, is quite emphatic on the need of decentralised society with equality pervading every sphere of life. "Centralisation as a system is inconsistent with the non-violent structure of society."³² If India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralise many things. Centralisation cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. How will the non-violent democracy adjust the claims of society and the individual, and reconcile individual freedom with social obligation, a task achieved at present by the state by means of coercion in the last resort? Gandhi rejects alike the unrestricted individualism that ignores social obligation as well as the other extreme which regards the individual as a mere cog in the social

30. *Young India*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.

31. *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 73.

32. *Harijan*, January 18, 1942, p. 5.

machine. The evolution of stateless non-violent democracy depends on the average individual acquiring personal swaraj. Roy comes close to Gandhi when he states that "every individual is capable of rational judgment, and that the purpose of social order is to allow every individual to develop that capacity."³³ Both Roy and Gandhi approach morality as problem of individual and social behaviour. Yet Roy for rational reconstruction of social order, does not break away from the materialist philosophy whereas Gandhi retains his mysticism.

Gandhi shares Roy's criticism of parliamentary government but it is due more to the spirit in which it is actually worked than to the constitutional machinery. He does not believe that parliamentary institutions are unsuitable to India, though he is against the wholesale copying of the West. Roy rejects parliamentary system, and replaces it by direct democracy. Though opposed to Roy's direct democracy, Gandhi's indirect election should not be branded as undemocratic, for it proposes to produce representatives, tried and tested in the life of groups, and substitute active participation for the present day passive representation.

Gandhi does not believe in state religion; he stands for secular state. "If I were a dictator," Gandhi said in 1946, "religion and state would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The state has nothing to do with it."³⁴ Roy, like Gandhi, advocates secularism since a theocratic state "will be an anachronism anywhere in the twentieth century world."³⁵ But Roy goes farther in raising the issue of the type of secular state will India be? He refers to the subjective and objective hurdles in the way of secularism in India. Congress politics, a subjective factor, ideologically and in popular demonstration, has never been secular. All these factors of life of the party in power are bound to influence the state in actual operation, if not in form. The objective hurdle is the medieval religious atmosphere, in which, a secular state is a misnomer. "It can only be the fraudulent

33. *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 23.

34. *Harijan*, September 22, 1946, p. 321.

35. "The Secular State," *Independent India*, Vol. XII, No. 30, 1948, p. 361.

means for a monopoly of secular power.”³⁶ This enabled Jinnah to emerge as Gandhi’s anti-Christ in Indian politics.

However, both Gandhi and Roy agree on limiting the functions of the state. In Gandhi’s non-violent society, the state will govern the least and use the least amount of force. Swaraj will be a sorry affair if people look *up to* the government for the regulation of every detail of life. Likewise, for Roy, State has no other function but to maintain order, to make laws and enforce them so that diverse forms of social activities could be carried on peacefully. It may not be known that Gandhi is not against persons being “detained so as to be unable to do harm, whether moral, social or political in accordance with the conception of respective states.”³⁷ Roy differs on this issue though he recognises the force in the argument that state and society need protection against subversion. But Roy protests against the subversive activity being made “an omnibus term.”³⁸ He condemns the Preventive Detention Act in India since it subjects basic rights to public safety. When and how public safety is endangered, is a debatable point. With some show of legality, the established government can claim to be the supreme judge and there will be an end of all liberty. Democratic practice being a matter of trial and error, Roy regards no law of Indian Republic, not even the Constitution, as sacrosanct. The claim to the moral sanction of any law involves the issue of the sanction of morality and the sanction between law and morals. As such, there is no room for preventive detention in Roy’s conception of Indian Polity and its function.

The non-violent democracy being the highest form of state, Roy regrets to say that India has deviated from the path, indicated by its patron saint. If non-violence is the highest truth of Gandhism, in that case, Roy maintains, “an unarmed state would be the experiment with truth on a national scale.”³⁹ He, therefore, expects non-violently won national independence to

36. *Ibid.*, p. 362.

37. *Bapu’s Letters to Mira*, Ahmedabad : Navajivan Publishing House, 1949, p. 205.

38. “Democratic Order and Preventive Detention,” *The Statesman*, Calcutta, August 22, 1951.

39. “In Memoriam,” *Independent India*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, 1949, p. 37.

be defended also non-violently, and wants Indian disciples of Gandhi to declare that an unarmed decentralised democratic state is a practical possibility. But Gandhi himself was not very hopeful of the immediate acceptance of non-violence as a principle of state policy. This is not possible till national security is guaranteed by an international order, though it is not denied that the process of self-government is one of conquest of violence.

Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya political thinker, shows remarkable influence of Roy in his plea for reconstruction of Indian Polity, and acknowledges it on the evolution of his political ideas.⁴⁰ His communitarian democracy is on the pattern of Roy's organised democracy. Discussing the shortcomings of parliamentary system, Jaya Prakash repeats Roy's arguments that "present-day mass elections, manipulated by powerful, centrally controlled parties, with the aid of high finance and diabolically clever methods and super-media of communication represent far less the electorate than the forces and interests behind the parties and the propaganda machines."⁴¹ Demagoguery is its another defect. But its most serious fault is its inherent tendency towards centralism. In Roy, Jaya Prakash finds the answer that "ultimately, the problem of democratic political practice is that of decentralisation."⁴² Jaya Prakash insists on increasing decentralisation so that the people directly participate in the administration of their affairs and control the civil servants who owe their jobs and are directly responsible to them.

Jaya Prakash attacks party-system, which exaggerate differences that should be minimised. Small caucuses of politicians rule in the name of the people, and create the illusion of democracy and self-government. Roy, too, blames party-system for debauching and destroying democracy. The purpose of parties is to capture power and retain it. The necessity of rigging election is inherent in the party-system under formal parliamentarism. Democracy can never be practised through the inter-

40. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, (Selected Works Of Jayaprakash Narayan), Ed. Bimla Prasad, Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1964, p. 218.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

42. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 86.

mediary of party-politics. Parties, therefore, find no place in the Indian Polity as conceived by Roy. Likewise, Jaya Prakash wants to "do away with the centralised control and party-government."⁴³ In the communitarian democracy that he advocates, there may conceivably be parties, but they are likely to be local factions, and, in any case, their role in the state will not be as commanding as that of the parties in the parliamentary system.

Roy and Jaya Prakash present more or less the same picture of new democracy, they want to build in India. To enable people to exercise sovereign power effectively, Roy recognises them in people's committees, which will act not simply as institutions of local government but as the local parliaments. It would be a polity with pyramidal structure. Jaya Prakash, moving in the direction of Roy, advocates 'swaraj from below' as the basis of new Indian polity. The communitarian democracy takes the form of primary community as its basic unit, which consists of revenue village. At the regional level, there is an integration of institutions and activities of primary communities, known as regional community. The regional communities will have to come together to form provincial community. The union of provincial communities would emerge into the national community. Like Roy, Jaya Prakash also dreams of a day when the national communities might federate together to form the world community.

Two conclusions may be drawn from Jaya Prakash's communitarian democracy—similar to those of Roy. Firstly, as one proceeds from the inner to the outer circles of communal life and organisation, there is less and less to do for the outer communities, and secondly, such a social organisation offers the utmost scope for the people, who are no longer an amorphous mass of human grains but organised in self-governing communities—to govern themselves.

Like Roy, Jaya Prakash lays emphasis on participation. To the extent to which democracy becomes truly participative, to that extent would the onrush of totalitarianism be stemmed

43. *A Picture of Sarvodaya Social Order*, Tanjore : Sarvodaya Prachuralaya, 1957, p. 52.

and even rolled back. For Roy and Jaya Prakash, the real problem of modern democracy is to define an optimum sphere of local authority, which can reconcile preservation of freedom with the demands of functionality that have been imposed on society by modern technology. As Jaya Prakash thinks, "this optimum community will be co-extensive with the regional community . . . as interposed between the primary and district communities,"⁴⁴ while with Roy, the idea gets its concrete form in people's committees working as local republics. The result will be a far reaching decentralisation of the state. Both Roy and Jaya Prakash claim to create a genuine pyramid of politics, based respectively on people's committees and village communities, the higher organ deriving electorally from the lower bodies, and having only residual co-ordinating functions. This will banish party-politics, and overcome the divisive character of party. Consensus becomes natural, and a general will emerges without impediment from the competition of power.

But Jaya Prakash parts company with Roy over the retention of the state, and comes under complete Gandhian influence in visualising "a stateless society."⁴⁵ In the case of Jaya Prakash, Marxism has an influence in a diametrically opposite sense: the 'withering away of the state' is an idea which can be used as a support for such decentralisation of power as would reduce the state to nothing. Jaya Prakash's ultimate aim to do without the state is as much the result of his old training as it is of his new allegiance, Sarvodaya. But, liberated from Marxism, Roy is satisfied with the organised democracy, in which, the state will be coincident with entire society, and consequently, will be under a standing democratic control. There is no need to abolish it.

Whereas Roy is free from mystical approach to the reconstruction of Indian polity, Jaya Prakash is drawn towards the concept of 'Dharma' in which he finds an example of "Synthetic, organic and communal organisation of Indian society."⁴⁶

44. *A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, Kashi; Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, 1959, p. 46.

45. *A Picture of Sarvodaya Social Order*, p. 28.

46. *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, p. 206.

He wants to revive 'Dharma' so that India is again organised on the basis of self-determining and mutually co-ordinating and integrating communities. The ancient concept of dharma coalesces in appropriate dharma for a democracy in Jaya Prakash's communitarian democracy. But Roy is consistent in maintaining rational and scientific attitude at all level of his thoughts on reconstruction of Indian Polity.

CHAPTER IV

INDIA AND ROY'S INTERNATIONALISM

Roy's treatment of Indian Polity did not remain internal; it acquired external dimensions. The free play of reason in Roy led him to project the image of internationalism in Indian politics. By drawing the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm, he tried to show that the greater idea of internationalism was gaining ground, and the struggle for national freedom could not be isolated from international struggle. Apart from the surgical treatment of nationalism, Roy's internationalism comes to grip with fascism, theory of international civil war, and the dilemma of peace.

THE CULT OF NATIONALISM

Presenting nationalism as "the philosophy of frog in the well,"¹ Roy feels that it has lost its utility, and, if it exists, it serves the forces of reaction as an antiquated cult. He found Indian nationalism degenerating into a negative force. Political freedom, the concrete object of nationalism, made anti-imperialism its main goal. The struggle for freedom of any particular country cannot possibly succeed so long its basic impulse is characterised by indifference for the welfare of the rest of the world. Freedom for any country would mean a place in the new world, and how could one expect to have that place while refusing to participate in the process of making it. Roy strikes a note similar to Tagore, who describes nationalism as "the organised self-interest of a whole people where it is least human and least spiritual."² But there is a difference also. Tagore is critical only of its political aspect; he is not opposed to cultural nationalism, in which, he takes pride. Roy is dead set against it in its entirety.

1. M. N. Roy, *Nationalism: An Antiquated Cult*, Bombay: Radical Democratic Party, 1942, p. IX.

2. Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Nationalism*, London: Macmillan & Co., 1924, p. 15.

Roy criticises the abstract ideal of national freedom, which pre-supposes a homogeneity and identity of interests on the part of population of a country, trying to attain it. National freedom does not mean freedom for the entire community which constitutes a particular nation. The struggle for national liberation is followed by social liberation, which puts a new context in the ideal of freedom. "This new conception of freedom necessarily transcends national boundaries, because its attainment pre-supposes efforts and co-operation on a large field."³ Therefore, the most effective method of promoting such freedom is to participate in the process of re-making the world as a whole. The freedom that the Indian masses wanted, could not be "attained in a nationalist isolation."⁴ India's struggle for freedom was treated by Roy as an integral part of world freedom.

Roy finds fault with the metaphysical concept of nationalism, which, he fears, lends itself to the suppression of individual freedom. Rights are subordinated to duties which must be performed for promoting national greatness. Here, Roy makes significant observation that "a national state is not necessarily a democratic state,"⁵ and that national freedom is not identical with democratic freedom. It is quite legitimate to ask if it is worthwhile to lay down one's life at the call of nation. "May I not ask what sort of an India will survive me."⁶ Individual is to assert his own against the nation. The misalliance with nationalism put into the concept of democracy a collectivist connotation, which could ignore the comforts and convenience of individual citizens. To Roy's regret, democracy by joining hands with nationalism broke away from its humanist tradition.

Roy feels so much disgusted with nationalism that he finds in it the expression of predatory jingoist aggressiveness. Orthodox nationalism is more of a spontaneous reaction of the moribund old order against the progressive forces than a revolutionary struggle against foreign rule. Roy, therefore, describes

3. Roy, *Nationalism: An Antiquated Cult*, p. 13.

4. M. N. Roy, *Nationalism, Democracy and Freedom*, Bombay: Radical Democratic Party, n.d., p. 28.

5. *Nationalism: An Antiquated Cult*, p. 27.

6. M. N. Roy, *I.N.A. and the August Revolution*, Calcutta: Renaissance Publishers, 1946, p. 11.

nationalism of Vivekanand as "a spiritual imperialism." Rejection of the claim of spiritual superiority for Indian culture as pseudo-philosophical, Roy sees no reason to assume that, given the same conditions which had thus revolutionised the intellectual life of Europe, the similar change would not take place in India. The cause of the religious mode of thought is neither geographical nor racial. It is social and intellectual. He dispels the belief that Western culture is essentially different from the Eastern, that one is materialist, while the other is spiritualist. Europe did not deviate from the spiritualist path owing to any innate perversity, nor did India remain faithful to the old ideas by preference. Roy's treatment is not ethical but historical. His point is that one is prior to the other, and the latest is associated with the highest stage of human progress, hitherto attained. In the backward stage of evolution, ignorance is shared by all human communities irrespective of their geographical location. This makes Roy to persuade his countrymen to shed prejudice against modern culture. Insistence on national culture means chauvinism.

Roy's internationalism, emerging into cosmopolitanism, considers the continuation of national states incompatible with the ideal of one world or a world government. He conceives of commonwealth of free men and women free from the bounds of national states. He, therefore, insists that Indian political aspirations must transcend the narrow limits of orthodox nationalism.

Roy is much ahead of time. Nationalism has its unpleasant aspects but it appears to be a necessary stage in historical development. No people, it seems, has been able to skip this stage. How could India, disunited and subjected to foreign rule, help in forging a broader cosmopolitan view. The British would not quit without being forced by the generation of some kind of national spirit. Roy fails to appreciate it.

Roy has taken one-sided view of nationalism. From its origin in Western Europe, nationalism has moved at a breathtaking pace, literally covering the whole world in less than two hundred years. This amazing phenomenon has brought in its wake both order and chaos, unity and disintegration, loyalty

and enmity, and respect as well as disregard for law. Yet as this remarkable doctrine sweeps into distant and remote lands of Africa and Asia, its days are numbered because of the proliferation of so many nation-states. It makes supra-national agencies essential for the ordering of human affairs. This lends weight to Roy's crusade against nationalism.

Nevertheless, Roy betrays ignorance about the origin of nationalism while deprecating it. Bonds of affection and mutual help have long provided a positive impetus for groups. Over the course of time, the basis of cohesion includes war against disorder, co-operation in a variety of other crises, similar laws, a common language and literature, and a common body of customs and habits. Very often people developed some form of economic and administrative unity. A political society that lasted long enough could evolve a shared history of experiences. Nationalism is "a state of mind . . . striving to correspond to a political act."⁶ The concept of separate political identity so essential to nationalism had to evolve first, in the form of independent western states. After the sovereign state emerged, nationalism gave this mould emotional content and cohesion.

Roy overlooks the fact that the key to nationalism lies in the self-identification of the people with the state. This occurred only gradually on the lands of its origin, and was related to, though not dependent on, the rise of popular government. Instead of belonging to the king or serving as a bloodless legal entity, the state won support of the people, who considered themselves as participating citizens whether or not they controlled its affairs through a democratic process.

Unfortunately, Roy lays all sins at the door of nationalism. After all, violent wars antedated the national upsurge, and sovereign states always fought over territorial border disputes, and inheritance, to say nothing of pride and vengeance. Moreover, transnational or anti-nationalist motivations—like religion, propagation of ideology, or preservation of social order—embittered and intensified many struggles. Nor has nationalism bred today's ideological menace, for communist theoreticians, though they seek to use the older doctrine, actually hold it in contempt. The great wars of modern time may in part owe their magni-

8. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York: Macmillan,

tude to the loyalty of people to the state, but the great strides in technology, science, strategy and administration have played at least an equally important role.

FASCISM

Before returning to India, Roy was in Berlin, where he saw the gathering storm of totalitarianism. On arriving, he noticed fascist tendencies in the country, and applied his mind to the study of fascism both as a national and international phenomenon.

Roy finds fascism as "the logical outcome of post-Hegelian idealism,"⁹ a pseudo ultra-modern positivism, which preaches super-religious self-effacement of individual, and is the expression of vulgar materialism. Based on pragmatism, fascism culminates into a spiritual philosophy of expediency. Describing it as a caricature of Hegelian dialectics, Roy finds remarkable similarity between fascism and Hindu mysticism, which represents a reaction against scientific view of life. Tracing Indian ancestry through Schopenhauer, whose disciple Nietzsche was the father of fascist philosophy, Roy draws parallel between "the doctrine preached in Gita and the fascist new Hegelian metaphysical conception of state."¹⁰ It cannot be denied that Gita has been one of the most important foundation of modern Indian nationalism. The Vedic conception of Earth was revived by Aurobindo, who identified it with Sanatana Dharma. Thus, he said, "The Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatan Dharma declines then the nation declines, and, if the Sanatan Dharma were capable of perishing with the nation, it would perish."¹¹ Similarly, B. C. Pal believed that Mother had a personality, and Indian history was the sacred biography of the Mother's mind. "Our arts, our poetry and our painting, our music and our drama, our architecture and our sculpture,

1944, pp. 18-19.

9. M. N. Roy, *Fascism: Its Philosophy, Professions and Practice*, Calcutta: D. M. Library, 1938, p. 2.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

11. Aurobindo Ghose, *Speeches*, Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1924, pp. 33-34.

all—are outflow of Mother's diverse, emotional moods and experiences. Our religion is the organised expression of the soul of Mother."¹² Aurobindo's and Pal's treatment of nationalism in terms of Sanatan Dharma and Mother's mind make them the spokesmen of political Vedantism. The spiritual basis of this Indian idea of the nation strikes to be typically Hegelian.

After Hegel, the Western philosophy struck out a retrogressive path in maintaining that materialism had failed to disprove the existence of transcendental categories. This led to the New-Hegelianism, which, Roy retorts, is "distortion and perversion of dialectics with the express purpose of presenting metaphysics and mysticism in a pseudo-scientific garb."¹³ It divides life into departments, material and spiritual. If mysticism is not unscientific, it is extra-scientific. Roy finds fascist philosophy beginning just where "Indian philosophy also claims to begin, beyond the reach of sense-perception, outside the ken of reason, beyond the radius of mind flies up in imagination to the dizzy attitude of metaphysical unrealities, to recognise them as absolute truth."¹⁴ Nietzsche's philosophy bears close resemblance with Hindu's conception of Karma, which emphasises the difference in the size of the five fingers of the same hand when attention is drawn to the social inequality. This leads to the moral approval of arbitrary power, and provides "metaphysical sanction for despotism and violence."¹⁵ Here is a contradiction between free will and determinism. Freedom, of course, is a relative term, always and everywhere. It is limited by the circumstances of life. Yet the human will is reluctant to give in without resistance. Otherwise, existence becomes tragic as is evident from the punishment of crime in India. "The criminal psychology co-operates with his punishment... It is written in his faith—result of his karma."¹⁶ This psychological state of Indian masses is the essence of authoritarian tradition. Revolt and submission are mutually exclusive.

From karma, Roy moves to the tradition of medieval back-

12. B. C. Pal, *Soul of India*, Calcutta: Chowdhry and Chowdhry, n.d., p. 199.

13. *Fascism: Its Philosophy, Professions and Practice*, p. 13.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

wardness, in which he finds the foundation of Indian fascism. Fascism is the last stage of decayed social order. The cultural backwardness makes the Indian masses superstitious, and inclined to blind faith. The absence of the traditions of individual liberty in Indian culture is most conducive to the growth of fascism. The emergence of mass man with high material expectations and low cultural demands aggravate the situation. Reviewing a socialist publication (*Why Socialism?* by J. P. Narayan), a leading Congress Press organ wrote : "India is traditionally bourgeois. Her religion, her society, her institution, have all been built on the corner-stone of authoritarianism and property. There is no denying that democracy in India, whenever it comes, will be more akin to the democracy of the Reich than the democracy of Great Britain."¹⁷ Roy is pessimistic about India where cultural disposition of the people make them expect miracles from the government, which is not possible from a democratic system, and which facilitates the rise of authoritarianism. His analysis comes close to Rousseauism, which has essentially meant the sacrifice of the individual to an end beyond himself. Rigid framework of social discipline destroys efforts in self-culture.

Roy, during the course of his exposition, characterises Subhas Bose's synthesis of nationalism and communism as nothing short of fascism. Aurobindo's political Vedantism left its impact on Bose. Following Hegelian terminology, Subhas regarded the two ideologies as thesis and anti-thesis, and asserted that the next phase in world history would produce a synthesis. "It will be India's task to work out this synthesis."¹⁸ The solution of Indian problems required economic reforms on a socialistic basis. Since the reforms could not be put through under democratic form of government, India "must have a political system—a state of an authoritarian character."¹⁹ Bose believed in a government by a strong party bound together by military discipline as the only means of holding India together and preventing a chaos when India became free. He was a

17. *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, April 20, 1936.

18. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1934*, Vol. I, London : Wishart, 1935, p. 431.

19. Jagat S. Bright, *Important Speeches and Writings of Subhas Bose*, Lahore: Indian Printing Works, 1946, p. 378.

strange combination of mysticism and reality, of intense religious fervour and stern political sense, of deep emotional susceptibility and cold, calculating pragmatism. Roy had in mind the Indian National Army organised by Bose, and his collaboration with Japan. If Subhas Bose had succeeded in his project, "Nippon would then have kept India safe and groaning under its octopus tentacles aided and perhaps shared by Germany and then, for decades to come, we would be exploited and enslaved in a way compared with which our present enslavement would feel like a nursery mimicry of cheerful servitude."²⁰ When viewed in this background, it would seem that the I.N.A's failure was a necessary part of the enshrining of Subhas as national hero.

In Roy's analysis, the major feature of fascism is the cult of superman. The Indian tradition of leadership lends itself to authoritarian concept. The leader is considered infallible. This was found in Gandhi, and "as the standard-bearer of Congress Nationalism, Nehru only tries to rationalise Gandhist medievalism."²¹ Supporting Roy, a former Congress President mentions that Sardar Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani "rarely tried to judge things on their own, and in any case, they were accustomed to subordinate their judgment to Gandhiji. As such discussion with them was almost useless."²² The presence of charismatic leadership indicates the fascist tendency in Indian politics. India's unconditional deference to Gandhi significantly referred to as Bapu, was modelled on the father-son relationship, and that Nehru, though temperamentally and by education a very different type, could not help stepping into the same role. "India is a democracy in name only; it would be more correct to call it Bapucracy."²³ Charisma is not a set of qualities, but a relationship between leaders and followers, involving a measure of devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism

20. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Subhas I Knew*, Bombay: Nalanda Publications, 1946, p. 187.

21. M. N. Roy, *Jawahar Lal Nehru*, Delhi: Radical Democratic Party, 1945, p. 10.

22. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1959, p. 75.

23. Arthur Kostler, *The Lotus and the Robot*, London: Hutchinson, 1960, p. 156.

or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him. Authority often seems to reside more in the personality than in any particular office. Beneath this often lies the feeling that the basic differences have been submerged, and national unity is achieved at the cost of democracy. This frightens Roy to predict that India is nearer to fascism than realised by few, though it may be non-violent.

Roy exaggerates the elements of fascism in Indian life. He confuses political paternalism with enlightened idealism. The fascist inference from Indian spiritual heritage is sheer distortion. Dharma always remained a moral-philosophical norm for action; it was conceived as the supreme political power. The emphasis was on moral basis of political authority. Only that king could exercise political supremacy who had conquered his lower self. This reminds one of the practice of virtue, emphasised by Plato, for the philosopher-king.

Roy misrepresents belief in karma, which provides an antidote to despair and constantly impels a man to action. The doctrine of karma does not operate to the exclusion of resistance to tyranny. Roy ignores the general problem of resistance. In spite of the efforts of the fascists to destroy all separate existences, there remain in all these dictatorships some groups that manage to offer some resistance to totalitarian rule. The family, the church, the university and other centres of technical knowledge, the writers and artists—each in response to the rationale of their being—must, if they are to survive, resist the total demands of the fascists. These are islands of resistance in totalitarian sea. Moral indignation, thwarted ambition, ideas and convictions have entered into the complex skein of resistance movements and acts. The Indian doctrine of karma, based on the belief in the triumph of good in life, does not prevent people from rising against fascist tyranny. The problem of resistance is basic to the modern world.

Roy's indictment of national leaders as fascist passes one's comprehension. Subhas Bose is the only leader who could be called a fascist. Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose also show some Hegelian influence but their theory of the functions of the state is not Hegelian but Spencerian. Gandhi could not be dubbed as fascist; he conceded the right of critics to fight and

destroy Gandhism. "You cannot realise Ahimsa unless you can peacefully tolerate your opponent."²⁴ To attribute fascism to such a person is travesty of facts. In an unending series of transformation, Gandhi took traditional precepts, adopted them to modern circumstances, and used them in the social and political struggle for objectives only recently established, and for the populace, poorly understood. The manner in which he did so bears upon the factor of communication in leadership. To be sure, few have understood the practical use of the symbol so well as did Gandhi. Gandhi spoke to the man in the village in terms he understood. He achieved in a manner not strictly typical of charisma. For Gandhi identified himself with the loneliest and, through constant contact with village India in the mode of service and with the drama of symbol, he established his appeal. He went on to transform—and to create—values, subjectives, programmes, and in doing so, carried with him a following greater than that of any other historical leader. This makes Gandhi a participative democrat rather a fascist.

One may agree with Roy that India lacks democratic tradition, and the existence of a peculiar social structure and the tendency to hero-worship make for authoritarian tradition in India. However, this does not necessarily make for the triumph of fascism. Roy falls in the error of equating traditionalism with fascism. Totalitarian regimes are historically novel. No government like fascism has ever before existed, even though it bears a resemblance to aristocracies of the past. Fascism, in its preliminary characterisation is "an autocracy based upon modern technology and mass legitimation."²⁵ There have been many types of autocracy in the history of government. But fascism, in a sense, is the adaptation of autocracy to the twentieth-century industrial society. What Roy fails to point out is that fascism emerges as a system of rule for realising totalist intentions under modern technical condition as a novel type of autocracy. The

24. Gandhi's Address at the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference at Malikanda, Dacca on 20th February, 1940, cited : Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, Bombay: Padma Publications, 1946-47, p. 182.

25. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 4.

misunderstanding has occasioned the misinterpretation of certain forms of tyrannical rule in classical antiquity as totalitarian. What is really the specific difference, the innovation of fascist regimes, is the organisation and methods, developed and employed with the aid of modern technical devices in an effort to re-suscitate such total control in the service of an ideologically motivated movement, dedicated to the total destruction and reconstruction of a mass society. Fascist ideology, in this perspective, is a radical form of a development which must not be confused with traditionalism. Roy fails to do it. He mixes it up with traditional notions and beliefs.

One does not find much evidence of fascism in India. Neither there exists a system of terror, whether physical or psychic, effected through party or secret police, nor one finds a technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of control, in the hands of government, of all effective means of communication. Yet it would be unsafe to ignore Roy's warning about the fascist danger. The vast powers of detention, and the frequent use of extra-ordinary authority under state of emergency, offend the citizen's rights, guaranteed in the Indian Constitution. It is legitimate to apprehend that once rulers become accustomed to the use of absolute powers, they may forget the vision of governing the country by ordinary laws. Nehru's death has weakened the democratic forces. His pronounced secularism had put under check the communal forces, while his socialist orientation had stolen thunder from the communist storm. He could protect the democratic fibre of Indian polity against these onslaughts, and himself would avoid the temptation of functioning as despot.

The emergence of consensus principle through 'the Kamraj Plan' is not healthy innovation in Indian politics. Generally speaking, consensus permits moderation, and even tolerance. On the contrary, if it is dogmatically based and ideologically rationalised, it may manifest itself in popularly acclaimed witchhunt. The kind of manipulated consensus that the fascists are able to create is a far cry from the sort of basic agreement in a democratic society. The working of the Indian National Congress, through the manipulated consensus, indicates the authoritarian trend in Indian politics.

THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL WAR.

Roy's exposition of fascism develops into a theory of International Civil War—a war between democracy and totalitarianism. Here he brings under discussion Congress attitude which was committed irrevocably to a resistance to India's participation in the Second World War. The central fact of the situation in 1939 was that the leaders of the Congress had declared their readiness to support Britain in war if India was allowed to do so as free nation. As against it, Roy had insisted upon an unconditional support to British resistance to fascism in the war because the destruction of fascism was not inconsistent with the ideal of freedom, and "the end of fascism may coincide with the end of imperialism in India."²⁶ Gandhi's attitude of moral support to the professed war aims of England prevented Congress from lending active co-operation. It was based on absolute non-violence which, for Roy, was not a practical proposition. This sceptical attitude, however noble it might be, was found irrelevant to political purpose.

Fascism being international, Roy saw the danger, near at home. He was tormented by the question how India could prepare to defend herself against fascism as long as imperialism did not give her the opportunity. He considered it perverse that the defeat of Britain would in any way promote the cause of Indian freedom. On the other hand, India would "gain her freedom by virtue of contributing to the defence of world freedom."²⁷ India could not be free in the midst of the world enslaved by triumphant fascism. If India did not help defeat fascist powers in the near East, she herself would be object of invasion. In view of that development, Roy could easily see how the Second World War was India's war as well as of England.

As Roy saw it, there was a national as well as international approach to things. The two could not be separated. "If fascism wins, not only will the world go to dogs, but together with

26. *Independent India*, Vol. III, No. 39, 1939, p. 610.

27. M. N. Roy, "Enemies of Human Freedom and Progress," *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 36, 1940, p. 452.

the world, India will sink into barbarism,"²⁸ and chances of Indian freedom would be destroyed. Roy dubbed Congress resistance as a virtual support to fascism. He, therefore, pleaded for broader vision of internationalism while approaching the problem of Indian freedom. The world was divided into two camps, democracy and freedom. He criticised Congress because its attitude was determined neither by enlightened consideration of national interests nor by any regard for any principle of human freedom. Roy wanted India to outgrow the limits of nationalist truculence.

The fight against fascism being a world-wide struggle, it could be fought everywhere. This turned war against fascism into international civil war. Indian atmosphere being pervaded with the spirit of fascism, battle must be fought in the home front. The incipient Indian fascism was sailing under the colour of anti-imperialism. In order to be a genuine anti-fascist, one must outgrow the nationalist outlook. Roy, thus, wanted to "defend India as a sector of international war front"²⁹ so that its people could take their legitimate place in the international alliance, engaged in destruction of fascism.

An interesting aspect of Roy's logic is that he did not consider Second World War as a war between two groups of imperialism, or a war between imperialism and fascism. There is no contradiction between the two. Both imperialism and fascism are born of capitalism, the former in the period of expansion and prosperity, and the latter during its decay. Two things which develop parallel to each other do not meet. But if they begin to grow fat, the intervening space fills up, causing conflict. But in Roy's opinion, "Imperialism and fascism are not related in space. They are related in time. Fascism begins where imperialism ends. Imperialism grows into fascism."³⁰ There may be war between two fascist powers but there cannot be war between imperialism and fascism because there cannot be war between the cause and its effect. Nevertheless, they differ, and, therefore, to call this war an imperialist war is to

28. M. N. Roy, "My Differences with the Congress," *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 48, 1940, p. 598.

29. "Our Party and its Task," *Independent India*, Vol. VI, No. 27, 1942, p. 324.

30. "Causes and Consequences of War," *Ibid.*, No. 34, p. 399.

identify fascism and imperialism. Economically, fascism restricts capitalist production, and politically, it abolishes the liberties of parliamentary democracy. As such, it could not be maintained that it was a war waged against Germany for promoting the imperialist interests of England. Here, it is necessary to mention that Roy was ahead of Indian communists, who gave up the slogan of imperialist war quite late, and formally adopted the People's War policy only in December, 1941, six months after the German invasion of Russia. Among the progressive Congressmen, only V. K. Krishna Menon thought that for the colonial peoples, the character of war had been transformed by the U.S.S.R.'s entry, but he maintained that India, though eager, could not participate in the war because of its enslavement.³¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, too, was stirred by Russia's plight, and he followed the development of events with anxious interest. But sympathy for Russia, however ardent, did not take precedence over the cause of Indian nationalism. "The nationalist position, the question of India versus England, had in no way changed."³² Roy was the only Indian, who consistently presented the anti-fascist character of war.

Roy regretted that the nationalist pre-occupation prevented Indian leaders from supporting Britain to 'the extent of helping fascism indirectly. Talking to American Correspondent, Alfred Tyrnauer, Subhas Bose had predicted that fascism would inevitably lead to a new world war, and this would offer India "a unique opportunity to emancipate herself from the British yoke."³³ Six years later, the war came and Bose looked upon it as god-sent opportunity for India to free herself. "The majority of the people were now convinced that the British would lose the war and some seemed to welcome a Japanese victory."³⁴ The characteristic feature of Indian nationalism was to ignore the fact that India was a part of the world. Essentially, it was not a conflict between two groups of national states. It was "the violent ex-

31. V. K. Krishna Menon, "Freedom Battle," *Labour Monthly*, London: August, 1941, pp. 364-367.

32. Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, London: Meridian Books Ltd., 1951, p. 419.

33. Alfred Tyrnauer, "India Would-be Fuhrer," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 11, 1944, p. 22.

34. Azad, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

pression of a conflict of idea and ideals.”³⁵ Roy found their votaries and opponents in each of the nations involved in the conflict. The deeper struggle underlying the military conflict was an international civil war which had to be waged along fronts cutting across all the countries and nations. Thus, Roy replaces Lenin’s conception of imperialist war by his theory of International civil war. If for Lenin, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, for Roy, fascism is the climax of imperialism in its degenerated form. Lenin’s theory of imperialism becomes obsolete in the age of fascism.

In pursuance of this theory of international civil war, Roy maintained that if fascism was not fought on all fronts cutting across the countries, the purpose of defeating it will not be attained. A military victory over the fascist powers might leave fascism fully intact, and even reinforced in countries which were not directly involved in the military conflict. India was in such position. The forces of fascism were well entrenched in India, and subjectively, she belonged to “the wrong side of the international civil conflict.”³⁶ The fundamental issue was the conflict between revolution and counter-revolution. The fight against fascism was the fight for revolution which had become a necessity for the future progress of mankind as a whole. Thus, the war meant a revolution also for India. The defence of India should not mean the defence of the status quo. It presupposed certain changes in social relations. It was no longer an issue between rampant nationalism and decayed imperialism. Defence of India was necessary for the defence of world freedom. Roy, therefore, found the then Government of India being “internationalised.”³⁷ To complete the process, government must be linked up organically with the Indian people. India could not become a sector of international civil war without her consent. Fascism stood for counter-revolution, and it could be overwhelmed only by the development of the forces of revolution, the victory itself must be the result of a revolutionary process, experienced in all countries.

This takes Roy to define revolution, which ethymologically

35. M. N. Roy, *War and Revolution : International Civil War*, Madras: The Radical Democratic Party, 1942, p. 37.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

is the result of revolt, but chronologically, it has a different meaning. It represents a turning of history, changing the course of ideas and events. There are two stages in Roy's concept of revolution. The first is the removal of conditions which militate against historically necessary progress. The second part is the development of the embryonic forces of progress in a new social and political system. The British conquest of India performed only the first part of the revolution, and that even only partially. The second part was never accomplished. Consequently, the forces of reaction remained intact in Indian society, even when a modern political and economic structure was superimposed upon it. The Indian nationalist movement, as a whole expressed the strivings of those reactionary forces matured under British protection as well as the aspirations of the progressive forces which had emerged in the atmosphere of general reaction. Roy found those two antagonistic forces inside India allied respectively with the two camps of the international civil war. The alliance was worldwide, counting upon adherents in every country.

Roy thought that in so far as fascism was concerned, Britain was not imperialist because "the destruction of fascism mean a severe blow to the economic system which constitutes the very foundation of imperialism."³⁸ Anti-imperialism in India became a meaningless shibboleth if it implied that the downfall of imperialism should be welcomed even when brought about by a victory of fascism. Roy asked if the contradiction between Indian nationalism and British imperialism was greater or more irreconcilable than the contradiction between imperialism and communism. If it was justifiable for Indian nationalism to non-cooperate with the British Government in the fight against fascism until the latter shed imperialism, would it not be equally justifiable for Britain to refuse help to the Soviet Union in the fight against fascism until Russia give up socialism. Patriotism was "not the issue of this war."³⁹ The fight was for greater things, affecting mankind as a whole. Cooperation between

37. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

38. M. N. Roy and Others, *India And War*, Part I, Lucknow: Radical Democratic Party, 1942, p. 206.

39. M. N. Roy, *Freedom Or Fascism*, Delhi: Radical Democratic Party, 1942, p. 32.

India and Britain would be a co-operation between the forces of democracy and progress in both countries.

The Second World War ended with the defeat of fascism. Imperialism as predicted by Roy, could not survive the war. Yet, Roy persisted with the theory with new dimensions. "The cold war between communism and anti-communism" was the changed form of "international civil war, waged inside every country."⁴⁰ Whereas he advocated active participation in the international civil war against fascism, he found non-involvement as the only way to put to an end the post-war rift, dividing the world into two camps. To reject communism, one need not be a dupe of Americanism. He called upon people to "refuse to join the mad race on either side."⁴¹ Their voice raised inside individual countries with sufficient strength and determination would herald the one world of reality, and terminate the international civil war.

Roy's theory of international civil war is biased against Indian National Congress, which he dubbed as a party, sympathetic to fascism. He fails to appreciate its difficulties that a slave India could not help to fight for the freedom of semi-enslaved China or wholly enthralled Europe. Congress understood the motive of the war as a war, meant for the protection of democracy. India could not endure the prospect of fascism, but she was even more tired of British imperialism, and viewed it as the hand-maid of the fascist power. The policy of keeping her dependent denied India the power to consciously adjust her ideas and necessities to the altered circumstances of the times. Congress was opposed to imperialism and fascism alike. Winston Churchill, the then British Premier made Congress task more difficult by declaring that the Atlantic Charter was not meant for application to India. The British Policy was found as one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism, and Congress opposition to war efforts was to defend the honour and elementary rights of Indian people. India, the classical land of modern imperialism, had become the crux of the question, for by the

40. M. N. Roy, "The Neutrality," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 50, 1949, p. 611.

41. "Two Worlds," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 36, 1950, p. 425.

freedom of India, would Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm. However, Roy is right in holding that the ideal of Indian freedom would have receded further if the fascist power had won, and that imperialism would not survive the world war.

Roy's exposition of international civil war in terms of conflict between democracy and fascism, or subsequently between communism and anti-communism, leads to a monistic explanation of the world crisis. In some respect, the rise of America and Russia to pre-dominance is an inevitable outcome of the western-state system. As large states on the periphery of a great civilisation, they experienced relatively little difficulty in expanding their realm. They also had the capacity to adapt the industrial revolution with relative speed, though the Russians found the task more painful and prolonged than did the Americans. Given the potential for conflict from this state-power perspective, cold war may be traced to Lenin on ideological grounds. Since Marxist orthodoxy made the capitalist states the main enemy, Russia inevitably had to oppose them, for they would surely try to thwart communist efforts of world revolution. In 1920, this first made Britain the arch villain, with United States succeeding to that role a generation later.

Roy's theory of international civil war fails to take notice of the world, highly politicalised. As a result, many serious problems emerge with an intensity and momentum completely independent of the cold war. The ultimate significance for world politics of these situations hinges on the behaviour pattern of the great powers whose strength enables them to become deeply involved in any dispute if they so choose. Nevertheless their capacity for intervention is not unlimited. Hence, their decisions depend in great part on how the regional powers, involved, respond to their initiatives, and how the world organisation is ideologically and administratively prepared to cope with such situations. These factors are by-passed in Roy's treatment of international civil war, which he aspires to terminate by his precept for peace.

PRECEPT FOR PEACE

Roy's precept for peace is based on a new concept of democracy. This was necessitated by the rise of popular forces, which could not be cramped into the framework of formal democracy. Failing that the pre-war ideological struggle would take the shape of conflict between a conventional attachment to formal democracy and the necessity for bold democratic practice. It was idle to talk of peace while forces of progress and reaction, of democracy and power-politics were clashing almost everywhere. Before peace becomes a reality, the fundamental social and political issues must be faced and equitably settled. In a civilised world, wars are bound to be ideological wars. The way out towards peace lies in the re-statement of democracy, which Roy attempts to achieve by reconciling freedom with security in international politics.

Roy wanted Russia to make some concessions to the western notion of democracy by discarding suspicions of imperialism and the subsequent fomentation of revolution in those countries. The foreign policy of a country is determined to a very large extent by its internal structure and functional conditions. Russia, Roy pointed out, could work for world peace if it followed at home the path of economic prosperity and "political freedom."⁴² This would discourage Soviet expansionism, threatening world peace. Roy wanted Stalin to follow the path shown by Lenin in this direction. "The chief condition of a democratic peace is the renunciation of annexations—not in the mistaken sense that all powers are to receive back what they have lost, but in the only correct sense that every nationality, without a single exception, both in Europe and in the colonies shall obtain freedom and the opportunity to decide for itself whether it shall become a separate state or whether it shall form part of any other state."⁴³ Stalin failed to live by Lenin's precepts. Instead, he followed the path of Red Napoleonism, threatening world peace.

Not oblivious of the danger of communism, Roy is op-

42. "If I were Stalin," *Independent India*, Vol. X, No. 33, 1946, p. 473.

43. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 127.

posed to meeting communism with force, dubbed by him as aggression for peace. The total mobilisation would lead to the suppression of all liberty, and subordination of social to military security. Destroyed in the process of preparation of war, "democracy will not survive its victory over communism."⁴⁴ It was not communism, but its militarisation which threatened freedom throughout the world. The fatal choice to join the basic issue of modern civilization on the battlefield places the non-communist world on the road to a similar regimentation, which begins with total mobilisation. Roy stands for an honest practice of democratic faith that, if the majority of a people in a country preferred communism, they are free to do so. If the issue of democracy vs communism was joined in each single country without intervention from outside, the peace of the world would not be disturbed."⁴⁵ Roy is inclined to fight communism at the level of ideas, and, as such, he rules out militarisation of democracy to ensure peace.

Though an Asian, Roy did not betray any regional bias for the East. He rejected the cultural unity of Asia as fiction, and racial solidarity a dangerous doctrine for it pre-supposed antagonism to European ideas and culture. That made Asian nationalism reactionary and inimical to world peace. Therefore, its progressive and liberating role was doubtful. The resurgence of Asia would defeat itself if it meant resurrection of fascism, and that tragedy could not be avoided unless the dangers of cultural jingoism were appreciated. For Roy, "a nationalist international, even if it is limited by the confines of one continent, is a contradiction in terms."⁴⁶ The Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistan conflicts vindicate Roy's thesis that solidarity of the Asiatic peoples on the basis of the exclusive cult of nationalism is not possible.

Roy's focus is on the weakness which brought centuries of misfortune to the peoples of Asia, and is inherent in their cultural heritage and social organisation. "A critical examina-

44. M. N. Roy, "Destructive Defence," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 39, 1950, p. 461.

45. M. N. Roy, "Democracy and Total Mobilisation," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 40, 1950, p. 474.

46. "Asia and the World," *Independent India*, Vol. XI, No. 13-14, p. 188.

tion of traditional cultural values, an iconoclastic attitude towards the gods of legendary past, realisation of the long overdue necessity of pulling down fossilised social institutions will eliminate the weakness, and set the Asiatic peoples on the road to freedom and progress."⁴⁷ That is Roy's perspective of resurgent Asia. Revivalism is not resurgence. The fall of democratic regime from Cairo to Jakarta with the possible exception of India, justifies Roy's contention that national freedom is not enough. The real resurgence will ensure the growth of democratic society, and eliminate threat to peace, posed by the rise of national dictatorship in most of the Asian countries.

Roy's precept for peace prevents him from admiring India's ambition for leadership of Asia, which, if ever materialised, would be cast on the Japanese pattern. This is the logical outcome of confusion, Roy makes between Indian nationalism and fascism. Therefore, under the leadership of nationalist India, the people of Asia would experience not a resurgence, but a social and cultural reaction. Consequently, Asia would become the home of fascism, defeated in Europe. Roy was not swayed over by nationalist sentiments over the question of Kashmir, which, he apprehended, might prove disastrous for the peace of the sub-continent.⁴⁸ "The issue of the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir has been lost in the struggle between India and Pakistan."⁴⁹ The recent Indo-Pakistan hostilities establish Roy's diagnosis that Kashmir is a dispute between two governments, and will have to be settled in the field of battle. The logic of nationalism, reiterates Roy, has "placed India on the road to war."⁵⁰ India cannot make any real contribution to peace so long as it thrives on national chauvinism.

No country's interest is ever served and promoted by war. Roy finds particularly so in the case of India. She needs a long period of peace in order to build up a democratic order, based on economic equality and social justice. Here, Roy comes

47. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

48. "Kashmir—Graveyard of Internationalism," *Independent India*, Vol. XII, No. 19, 1948, p. 228.

49. M. N. Roy, "Kashmir at any Price," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 39, 1949, p. 480.

50. Roy, "Kashmir—Graveyard of Internationalism," *op cit.*, p. 245.

quite close to Gandhi, in whose opinion, the self-sufficing economy of the non-violent state will be the strongest bulwark against aggression, though war has many other causes besides the economic. Roy fears that India's future will be shaped by the spectre of communism, which may tempt militant nationalism to wield "unlimited power with the tacit consent of democratic world in jitters."⁵¹ If communism comes nearer home as a real danger to the established order, the Preventive Detention Act and the laws of the Indian Republic will not protect liberty anymore than the decrees of the communist dictatorship. Roy's fears have come true. Ever since the communist invasion of India by China in 1962, India has lived most of the time in the state of emergency, and Government has acquired vast powers to cover the national defence. Roy anticipated these despotic inroads into Indian democracy, which do not augur well for world peace. The difficulty in defeating communism resulted from the fact that nationalism was not a democratic force. The authoritarian tradition of oriental culture, from which communism gets its inspiration, need to be replaced by democratic tradition to enable India to play its role in building the structure of peace.

Welcoming the United Nations Organisation as a positive step towards world peace, Roy was disappointed over its inadequacy to work as a world government, which pre-supposes disappearance of the national states. A world composed of national states can never have peace. Nationalism and internationalism are contradictory political cults. Roy stood for cosmopolitanism not as preached by institutions but as professed and practised by individuals. The hope for peace lies in human endeavour, which will "rise out of the ruins of collectivism, nationalist as well as communist."⁵² Roy's precept for peace is completely shorn of both institutional and national framework. Institutional devices would not carry mankind very far because behind institutions are the men who run them, and the political creations of imperfect men are also bound to be imperfect.

51. "The Spectre of Communism," *Independent India*, Vol. XII, No. 11, 1949, p. 127.

52. M. N. Roy, "Dis-United Nations," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 17, 1949, p. 204.

One finds humanist conception in Roy's foundation of peace. This new vision could be reached through mutual trust, co-operation and good will. What is needed is a psychological revolution and moral regeneration. The core of the problem is that the end has been lost in the conflict of means for attaining it. The peace can be built on co-operative world order, which cannot rise without the existence of a unity of outlook and a community of interests among people without national and class differences. A world community involves the development of moral and political judgments, shared by wider than national groups, the creation of something to be loyal to beyond that of the national state. Only such a world view will usher in a climate of public opinion, assuring peace.

Roy's pacifism preaches that if only human morality is bettered there will be no more wars. Gandhi and Vinobha are the best advocates of this view. The classical statement of this position is found in Erasmus, who correctly concluded that wars were not the work of common people, but of kings and bishops, "satraps and grandees," and that "upon the whole it must be said that the first and most important step towards peace is sincerely to desire it."⁵³ This, however, is a very slow process. Roy is quite aware that this cannot be achieved in a generation or two, and "once we take a fatalistic attitude, the game is lost."⁵⁴ It must be an unexcited movement, guided by faith in humanity and the triumph of goodness and truth, provided that the majority of men sufficiently care and work for such faith. Reason and persuasion are the foundations on which lasting peace can be built.

A critique of Roy's precept for peace may reveal its utopian nature. While dismissing nationalism as a major hurdle, Roy ignores that corporate existence as a distinct race and nation is the only way in which the ultimate brotherhood of humanity can be achieved. Nationalism is a process through which a nation expresses itself, not in isolation from other nations, but as part of a great scheme by which, in making its own expression, and therefore its own identity, it materially

53. *The Complaint of Peace*, London: Headley Bros., 1917, p. 71.

54. "Is War Inevitable?" *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XXI, No. 10, p. 114.

assists the self-realisation of other nations as well. Diversity is as real as unity. Roy strikes a dogmatic note that the idea of the sovereign state stands as a rigid barrier against the spread of internationalism and peaceful relations between states. But it may be argued that state sovereignty has been restricted by the growth of international law and agreements; that it is a legal fiction, no longer corresponding to the facts of international life. The abolition of national states, as suggested by Roy, does not seem to be realistic. One should aim at the more practical ideal of removing the objectional features of nationalism so that it can be harnessed to serve the cause of peace. Peace is an attitude of mind as well as the attitude of a social and political structure. A disciplined harmonious mind is the best preparation for peace. If nationalism can inspire for war, it can equally cultivate for peace. With means of mass communication at its disposal, it may not be difficult for the national democratic state to educate its citizens in the spirit of peace.

Roy underestimates the value of institutional framework for preserving and promoting world peace. The League of Nations and the U.N.O. have served as important milestones in building up not only an important edifice of collective security but also as factories of world public opinion. In fact, the institutional framework for world peace would be a much more effective means of the psychological transformation of the individual that Roy desires than preaching the sermon in void. He gets dismayed over the dismal working of U.N.O., forgetting that cosmopolitanism, he advocates, is a process in which the international organisation is the most important development. It seems difficult to agree with Roy that the U.N.O. is an agency of national convenience for the member states.⁵⁵ In fact, just as the sovereign state originally used feudal doctrines to justify its existence, so the international organisation might gradually grow from its origin as servant of national interests. With a record marked by repeated and tragic failures and unexpected successes, it bears a striking resemblance to the nation-state in its early confused years. If peace is a co-operative enterprise, international organisation, as the co-operative society of state is, the best means to achieve it.

55. Roy, "Disunited Nations," *op. cit.*, p. 203.

Roy confuses the issue. The existence of such a machinery may in fact mean either of two quite opposite things. It may mean that there is so much intercourse between these peoples that it has become necessary to provide official inter-governmental machinery to regulate it. But it may equally mean that there is little control among these people, and that what there is, has been carried on under such difficulties that private agencies have found it necessary to have recourse to public safeguards. In other words, an official machinery may be an index, either of a very intimate relationship or of the exact contrary. However, the unofficial action of Roy's conception, is one of the principal elements in the whole international problem and its existence must be kept in mind. Without the co-operation of voluntary agencies, inter-governmental organisation can never proceed very far. It is not government but peoples that give international relations both their substance and their particular tone. The essential facts are in the realm not of machinery but of politics and psychology. They are reflected in the use, made of machinery and in the vicissitudes to which it is subjected. Clearly, the development of international organisation has come in response to the needs of mankind. International organisation at its current stage of development can assist in the accomplishment of peace. India's contribution to peace through the U.N.O., is not negligible.

Roy's theory of peace is conspicuous by the absence of law to implement it. The underlying principles of world peace through world law cover limited field of war prevention, and forbid the use of force by any nation against any other for any cause whatever, save only in self-defence. World law cannot be applied without world judicial tribunals, and organs of mediation and conciliation as the means for dealing with all international disputes. Equally important is the creation of a permanent world police force which would be fully adequate to forestall or suppress any violation of the world law against international violence. One must also face the fact that until there is complete disarmament of every nation without exception there can be no assurance of genuine peace as it would be impracticable to maintain a sufficiently strong world police force to deal with any possible aggression. All this required

world law to develop comprehensive machinery to cope with the day-to-day situation. But Roy does not present any concrete agency through which peace can be promoted and preserved. It is inescapable that if the world really wants peace, a comprehensive and interrelated system of this general character will be required.

It may be suggested that the creation of new and separate world organisation adequately equipped for the maintenance of peace would necessarily overshadow the present United Nations. But it must be recognised that if the creation of adequate world institutions for prevention of war is to be achieved through the medium of the United Nations, numerous amendments of the Charter will be required which would together amount to a fundamental change in the structure and powers of the United Nations. And if it should develop that for technical or psychological reasons it would be more difficult to accomplish these amendments than to create a wholly new world organisation to take over the peace-maintenance of the United Nations, there should be no objection to that alternative method. But Roy disowns United Nations without suggesting any alternative agency, charged with the task of maintaining peace.

Roy only envisages the idea of "a cosmopolitan co-operative commonwealth of creative men,"⁵⁶ which commensurates with the ultimate goal of any international organisation. What is needed is to exploit more fully the possibilities inherent in the cosmopolitanism, exhibited in private or non-governmental organisations as well as the expansion of the public, specialised organisations. If international agencies become numerous and wide-spread enough, and answer the needs of enough peoples, there can develop a loyalty to them and to a growing sense of world community of which they are part. But a sense of belonging to and sharing a part of life of a wider than national community will not come by legislating or decreeing it or by wishful thinking. To appreciate Roy's cosmopolitanism, one must remember that there can be no time-table for bringing about the world community, which comes first, and the authority, which comes second, in the same general process that has created the individual national state. Roy's cosmopolitanism hardly tallies with the reality because the possibility of estab-

lishing a limited world government is at present as remote as it has been for centuries. Yet it may be important to remember that Roy attaches greater importance to the substance than to the infra-structure of peace. Only substance can raise the precept to the level of practice, which the world so badly needs in the realm of peace.

CHAPTER V

RESTATEMENT OF INDIAN MATERIALISM

Roy ceased to be Marxist but he continued to remain materialist. His exposition of Indian materialism serves to provide a needed stimulus for fresh thinking on the subject. In the earlier Indian philosophy, one can find both the idealist and materialist schools which regarded mind, life and matter as the manifestations of a single universal principle. The materialist philosophers of India are known as Lokayats or Charvakas. Many Westerners have carried on a tradition, partially stimulated by the sympathy with India's struggle for freedom, of praising Indian thought for the very beliefs that were rapidly finding disfavour among intellectuals of a naturalistic and scientific bent in the West. This has led to unfortunate results, not the least of which was to make the Indian suspect of considerably more mysticism and irrationalism than it actually contained. Roy's restatement of Indian materialism puts Indian thought in proper perspective.

It was during long period of imprisonment that Roy turned to the serious study of natural and social sciences. Indian philosophy and the European classics became the main fields of investigation. He was immensely struck by modern Indian literature as represented by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee in whose Bengali novel 'Sesh Prashna,' a girl is presented as veritable Dionysus. "How she pulls down all gods—customs and traditions, sanctified through ages, and gives sound lessons to young India which piously follows Tagore or Gandhi."¹ Roy also appears to have been influenced by Thomas Hunt Morgan's theory of mutation and C. Lloyd Morgan's doctrine of life emerging from non-living matter. In addition to that, he comes under the impact of J. B. S. Haldane's concept of life appearance out of chemical compound, and Heckel's hypothesis of spontaneous generation of organism. Seeking wisdom in secular philosophy

1. M. N. Roy, *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary, Vol. III, Letters From Jail*, Calcutta: Indian Renaissance Publications, 1943, p. 5.

and science, Roy undertakes the task of interpreting Indian materialism.

INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN MATERIALISM

Roy finds evolution of thought in ancient India similar to that in any home of old civilisation. The savage belief in magical power is primitive rationalisation, that nothing happens without a cause. In course of time, it developed in two directions, natural religion and naturalism. One ascribed the cause of each natural phenomenon to super-human and consequently populated with a galaxy of gods, the second dared search for the cause of natural phenomenon in nature itself. The basic defect in ancient philosophy is ascribed by Roy to 'a prior' assumption, which blocked the way to empiricism. Owing to weakness, "ancient Indian materialism was eventually overcome by spiritualism, and philosophy degenerated into dogmatic theology."² Roy regrets that with the exception of Nyaya, Vaisesika and Sankhya, no other speculative system tried to explain the origin, evolution and phenomena of nature independent of supernatural agency. With such an assumption, speculative thought becomes theology—a dogmatic assertion about the supernatural being which, by its very nature is beyond all enquiry or description.

Roy describes Hindu philosophy as the most classical example of confusion in speculative metaphysical thought. The most obvious contradiction is the admission of the reality of that which is declared in the same breath to be delusion. "If the immaterial is really immaterial the material can never grow out of it. Two things having nothing in common cannot stand in relation of cause and effect. If the material comes out of the immaterial, then, the latter cannot be what is supposed to be : it must also be material. Thus there is one substance in existence. The dualism is only a sophistry, a verbal contrivance to defend a useless hypothesis. Should immateriality be

2. M. N. Roy, "Radhakrishnan in the Perspective of Indian Philosophy," in Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan*, New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1952, pp. 550-551.

conceded to the origin of things, the very existence of immateriality itself would be denied. For existence, which means, extension in space, is not compatible with the conception of immateriality.”³ In other words, it is wrong to assume that Indian thought is completely governed by the idea of world and life negation. Roy’s analysis reveals that life affirmation is present at the back of this thought. It would be more appropriate to infer that the existence and interfusion, life affirmation and negation not only constitute the special characteristic of Indian thought but also determine its development.

Endless confusion naturally results from such arbitrary splitting of the unity of being. Roy makes one of the most controversial statements ever made concerning the sum and substance of Indian idealistic speculation: “Proposition:—the finite is infinite; problem:—how, then can the finite know the infinite? Solution:—the finite must become the infinite.”⁴ That the Indian materialist is not faced with this problem until it is insisted upon by the idealists is quite clear. The logic here is significant. If the Vedas contradict themselves, that should not be allowed since that would affect their authoritativeness. The basic principle of this remarkable logic is to submit everything to the test of an unverifiable hypothesis, and to reject all evidence against that hypothesis, and render it untenable.

As everywhere else, so in India also, says Roy, philosophy was originally materialistic. In India, too, physics preceded metaphysics. The materialistic outcome of the speculations of the rebels against the Vedic natural religion, contained in three systems of Vaisesika, Sankhya and Naaya, which, as Roy puts it, “provided the inspiration for the greatest event in history of ancient India—the Buddhist revolution”⁵ The Buddhist and Jaina schools have their origin in Vaisesika or Sankhya conjointly with special debt to Kanada and Kapila. The development of Indian thought during nearly a thousand years, beginning from the Seventh Century B.C. was very largely dominated by materialistic and rationalistic tendencies. It is highly doubt-

3. *Ibid.*, p. 551.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 552.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 556.

ful whether the Vedantic system was formulated before the end of that Golden Age of Indian history.

The long process of the development of materialist thought in ancient India found culmination in the Charvaka system of philosophy, which Roy compares with Greek Epicureanism. They held that truth can never be known except through senses. Even reason was not to be trusted because every inference depended for its validity not only on accurate observation and correct reasoning, but also upon the assumption that the future would behave like the past, of this there was no certainty. That was anticipating modern agnosticism more than two thousand years before Hume.

Hailing the Buddhist philosophy, Roy maintains that their doctrine controverted the basic assumption of the orthodox Hindu philosophy of the Vedantic system. Buddha found that belief in God was useless. Since the existence of God as the spiritual cause of the universe can be established only upon the assumption of the extra-materiality of human consciousness, the rejection of the doctrine of the soul necessarily leads to the denial of God. Roy refers to "Buddhist materialism" as based on "Vaisheshik atomism."⁶ Explaining, Roy points out two aggregate of existence—external (material) and internal (mental). But mind pre-supposes the existence of an atomic combination. The external, composed of the elements (bhuta) and elemental (bhautika), embrace the outside nature as well as the gross bodily organs. The former is made of elements of earth, water, fire and air.

The ideal of 'Nirvana' represented the nihilism of Buddhist philosophy. Roy considers it as the quintessence of the ideology of social dissolution. It was the ideology of those who could not deny the effects of the material existence. The patronage of the upper classes was responsible for "the idealistic deviation of Buddhist philosophy."⁷ In order to refute the Brahmanical dogma of eternal truth, the rebels expounded the doctrine of the momentariness of everything. The idealistic deviation rendered Buddhism susceptible to Brahmanical influence.

6. *Materialism : An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought*, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1951, p. 97.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Sankaracharya had no difficulty in proving the incompatibility of 'Nirvana' with the materialistic core of Buddhism. The priestly monopoly of ideology was reasserted after it had been shaken by the Buddhist revolution.

In Jainism, Roy finds the dynamic view of nature attaining a high degree of clarity. Though they believed in soul, they did not find any divine spark in it. The soul was composed of an infinite number of articles—soul atoms, which lent materialistic colour to Jainism. Yet Roy was not satisfied. He criticised the doctrine of self-mortification in Jainism since it blocked all the ways of knowing external causes. The taboo on the joy of life, the prejudice against the urges emasculates man. It had disastrous effect for the country. The prevailing spirit of pessimism made India an easy prey to foreign invaders. The idea of conquering the external world never entered Indian speculation. As the way out of the miseries of life, the doctrine of self-mortification represented the defeat of the forces of dissatisfaction with the established order of things.

Accepting that ancient materialism was found originally in the Vaisesika system, Roy attributes dominating position in the intellectual life of the period to the Sankhya system of Kapila, the merit of whole philosophy is the recognition of the objective reality of the physical world. Roy finds theory of cognition definitely materialistic. The underlying principle of the Sankhya theory of knowledge is identical with the modern materialistic principle that consciousness is determined by being. Atomism is rejected because pain and pleasure are not properties of the atom. Everything in existence is an aggregate of pain, pleasure and delusion, which are perceptible. But this raises a very important question : What is the cause of these qualities ? Kapila himself asserts that something cannot come out of nothing. To avoid this dilemma, he makes nature an all pervading primal substance. The atomist would contend that the atom could just as well represent the equilibrium of qualities. Nevertheless, Roy attributes materialism to Sankhya for its sensational theory of knowledge though he concedes that "the Sankhya system decidedly rejects the doctrine that the external world has no objective existence, and that nothing exists but thought."⁸

8. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Yet, Roy finds too much in Sankhya and exaggerates its materialistic nature. The most balanced view seems to be that Sankhya thinkers despite their atheism, teach emancipation from the bonds of nature. Roy misses the point, and confuses atheism with materialism.

Roy regrets that the rational and naturalistic teachings of materialistic thinkers were buried under the ruins of Buddhist revolution. Brahmanical reaction checked all spiritual progress so successfully that a renaissance of liberating thought of antiquity was delayed until it was too late. Agreeing that Buddhism was the revolt of Khattryias against Brahmanism, Roy reveals that the mercantile class also entered into the social background of the revolution as a reaction against the code of Manu, which placed the merchants under all sorts of disadvantages. Sea voyage was prohibited by Manu because it encouraged heretical ideas. That is why, in the absence of a mercantile class as a powerful social force, Indian speculative thought could not become philosophy in the correct sense. Land was held by the Khattryias and the Brahmins—classes which by their very social being—were hostile to the trade. Instead of challenging the monopoly of the priesthood, the Khattryias were closely associated with it. That relation was established in consequence of the ruinous civil war recorded in the Mahabharata. Brahmanic supremacy became absolute in the conditions of social dissolution. “The natural religion of Vedas, instead of being replaced by a higher form of faith, namely monotheism, degenerated into fatalism of the Surities and the absurd extravagances of Puranic superstitions.”⁹ Supported by the forces of superstition, Hindu orthodoxy resisted the triumphant march of Buddhist revolution, and finally overwhelmed it. Roy describes it as the most tragic event in the history of India. But Roy is optimistic and sure that as soon as prolonged social stagnation is broken, Indian thought will “go rapidly ahead from the point at which it temporarily stopped and catch with the progress made by others.”¹⁰ India herself should be able to learn the true message of her ancient philo-

9. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

10. “Irreligiosity and Atheism of Hindu Philosophy” *Independent India*, Vol. II, No. 23, 1938, p. 358.

sophy. The correct evaluation of that philosophy will be to discern the germ of materialism imbedded in it.

It may be said against Roy that he fails to grasp the value of Indian mysticism, which represents "the perfect form of world view."¹¹ Man endeavours to arrive at a spiritual relationship to the infinite being to which he belongs as a part of nature. Man studies the universe to discover whether he can apprehend and become one with the mysterious will, which governs it. Only in spiritual unity with the infinite being can he give meaning to his life and find strength to suffer. As against real joy, which follows spiritualism, sickness and dissatisfaction and disillusionment inevitably follow a long outburst of materialism.

In his interpretation of Indian materialism, Roy ignores the historical role played by religion. Fear is the basis of religious dogma as of so much else in human life. Fear of human beings, individually or collectively, dominates much of social life, but it is fear of nature that gives rise to religion. The antithesis of mind and matter is more or less illusory. The line between the two is neither sharp nor immutable. Human powers are not always unlimited. Man cannot prevent death although he can often delay it. Religion helps in overcoming this fear. Roy ignores the force of the logic that if world is controlled by prayer, man acquires a share in omnipotence. Belief in God still serves to humanise the world of nature.

Roy confounds the relation between man and nature. Nature is only a part of what man can imagine. Human beings are themselves the ultimate and irrefutable arbiters of values, and in the world of values, nature is only a part. Nature itself is neutral, deserving neither admiration nor censure. The significance of religion as part of human value system cannot be minimised on the ground that scientific values have come to the fore. The belief that metaphysics has no bearing upon practical affairs is a proof of logical incapacity. Behind the social protest, there is to be sensed a growing alarm at the threatened isolation of the individual in an atomised society in which communal religion has ceased to function and nothing

11. Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, Bombay : Wilso Publishing House, 1960, p. 21.

is taking place. This has become a familiar theme and one that tends to be shrugged off.

CONCEPTION OF MATERIALISM

Roy approaches materialism as the only possible philosophy. Materialism is not the monstrosity it is generally supposed to be. It represents the knowledge of nature as it really exists. Giving the essence of materialism, Roy attributes the origin of all existence to matter, and nothing exists but the matter. All other appearances being transformation of matter, they are governed by laws inherent in nature. These laws are not mysterious but are based upon knowledge acquired through contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomena of nature itself.

Going into the genesis of materialism, Roy explains the ignorance of the primitive man, imagining supernatural forces behind nature. A crude phenomena inevitably results from this observation. The inquisitiveness of man, which leads to the establishment of natural religion, is the first impetus to the birth of science. Religion is presented by Roy as "the naive form of nascent science."¹² But the detection of mechanical regularity in nature undermined the primitive faith in gods as they were found to be the inevitable effect of given cause. The germs of materialism became evident. Philosophy is born not as metaphysics, but as a physical science to culminate after long as the science of sciences.

The natural religion of the Vedas is deification of the diverse phenomena of nature as objects of worship. Roy describes it as the religion of the decentralised tribal society. Montheism, the belief in one God, rises as the ideology of a centralised state. The development of the religion of a particular group of human beings from polytheism to monotheism is influenced by the intensity of the social crisis under which it takes place. The absence of a strictly monotheistic cult in religion reflected the political disunity of India. The outstanding feature of the political history of ancient and medieval India is the absence of a centralised state.

12. *Materialism : An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought*, p. 9.

Turning to its growth, Roy attributes its rise to the atomist theory, propounded by Democritus and perfected by Epicurus. Its main propositions are summed by Roy as given under.

1. Out of nothing arises nothing. 2. All change is only the combination and separation of atoms. 3. Nothing happens by chance; everything has a cause and happens of necessity. 4. Nothing exists but atoms and empty space. 5. The atoms are infinite and of endless variety of form, and lastly the soul consists of the finest and most mobile atoms, which permeate the whole body, and produce the phenomenon of life.¹³

The first proposition contains the two basic principles of modern physical science, namely the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy, the second lays down the cornerstone of a strictly mechanistic cosmology. The discovery of the mechanistic laws of nature has cleared away the prejudice of a Final Cause, and has theoretically established the view that nothing happens by chance; every happening has its cause. Knowledge of the changing phenomena makes man free from helplessness, and thereby makes him happy. Every pleasure is good because it results from knowledge; pain is evil because it is caused by ignorance. Knowledge is acquired in the process of the action of man. Reflection and enquiry take place in consequence of the contact of man with external objects. The ideas develop in an endless form. The materialist conception of the origin and evolution of the universe is the mother of science.

To make his concept clear, Roy examines materialism in relation to scepticism, agnosticism and positivism. Scepticism is described as the ideology of the middle class. Ever since the fall of ancient materialism, neither speculative philosophy nor religion was able to answer the old question about the way and how of things. Scepticism was a protest against this trend. Though it encourages a healthy critical attitude and disregard for absolute authority, yet it is not free from teleology which runs counter to materialism. Roy regards positivism materialistic but not agnosticism, which he describes as the philosophy of ignorance, and ignorance is the mother of faith.

Roy presents materialism as the explanation of the world

13. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

without the assumption of anything supernatural. It establishes "a monistic view of the universe, and reveals the substratum of everything—body, mind, soul—as a material substance, physical entity, largely known and progressively knowable."¹⁴ Roy is aware of the crisis of materialism. Whenever the human mind begins to penetrate unknown regions, idealistic prejudices are likely to creep in. At such points of transition, Roy relies upon the theories established by previous experience to guide against possible deviation.

Is materialism practical idealism? Roy's answer is in affirmative. He clearly perceives practical idealism implicit in materialism. "The freedom from the metaphysical conception of the absolute, immutable, categorical liberates man from the fetters of the traditional, of the respect and awe for the established order of the world. There is nothing sacrosanct, nothing permanent, nothing eternal. To change is the nature of everything."¹⁵ Materialist philosophy inspires man to change the world and himself in process. Indeed, the philosophical materialist is the greatest practical idealist. The ideal of life is the motive force of the life of materialist. It may, however, be made clear that Roy's concept of materialism admits practical idealism without embracing idealist philosophy, though the dividing line between practical idealism and idealist philosophy is so thin that one may imperceptibly shade off into other, thus exposing materialism to the onslaughts from the quarters, Roy dreads most,

Roy is guilty, unconsciously and in spite of explicit disavowals, of a confusion in his imaginative picture of matter. He thinks of the matter in the external world as being represented by his precepts, whereas these precepts are really part of the matter of the percipient brain. By examining one's precepts, it is possible to infer certain formal mathematical properties of external matter, though the inference is not demonstrative or certain. One obtains knowledge which is not purely formal.

The point which concerns the philosophy of matter is that the event out of which Roy constructs the physical world is very different from matter as traditionally conceived. Roy presents

14. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

tautology, not a physical fact. Indestructibility is an empirical property, believed to be approximately but not exactly possessed by matter. Events are neither impenetrable nor indestructible. Roy seems to be under the pressure of space and time in the imaginative application of his logic. He makes vain efforts to reduce psychological law, physiological law and chemical laws to physical laws. But none of them is exact and without exceptions. They state tendencies and averages rather than mathematical laws governing minimum events.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Roy's materialism is based on scientific theory of knowledge. Knowledge is possible because there is a causal connection between mind and matter. To Roy, ideas are representatives of reality inasmuch as they are derived from experience. "They represent the knowledge of things, not things themselves."¹⁶ Ideas being product of interaction between the mental and physical cannot circumscribe the radius of the mind's reach. They result from mental activity; the cause is never limited by effect. To be representative, ideas must correspond with things as they are. If the world of experience is characterised by the absence of absoluteness, idea about it also must have that character. In other words, they must change according to the knowledge of the world. The representative character of ideas is relative because it is necessarily proportionate to the extent and accuracy of knowledge. In formulating a scientific theory of knowledge, Roy clearly distinguishes the object from the thing. The one is epistemological category, the other ontological. An object is a thing perceived. The two are not identical ontologically. Objects are always things, that is to say, they are existentially real. But things are not always object to perception or of knowledge; they may exist without attaining the epistemological state of being objects.

Roy attributes the failure to distinguish between the objective reality and the thing, to epistemological muddle.¹⁷ In com-

16. M. N. Roy, *Science and Philosophy*, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1947, p. 195.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

pleteness of the knowledge of a thing, it does not affect its objectivity. Besides, as objective knowledge, it is complete because it covers the parts of the thing actually perceived. As regards the thing, it is not complete but as regards the object, it is. Therefore, scientific knowledge is always objective, although ideas resulting from it may change from time to time.

The central point in Roy's theory of knowledge is that cognition is a relation between mind and the world. Knowledge is objective and subjective at the same time. Both the correlates—the knowing self and the world known—are equally vital. To solve its problem, epistemology must start from the ontological reality of mind. Such a point of departure does not commit Roy to admit psycho-physical parallelism either in individual or on the universal scale. Mind is real because it is a part of the physical world.

Roy finds in life the immediate foundation of mind. In the absence of life, the existence of mind cannot be proved. Life being a phenomena of physical universe, mind also is a part of nature. The subjective elements of the process of cognition are parts of the all-embracing complex of physical nature. Knowing is a act of mind. But knowledge is not identical with thought anymore than thought is identical with being. "Thought is mind's property, whereas knowledge is a possession."¹⁸ Roy's distinction is fundamental. The one is inherent quality, the other is acquired from outside. Knowledge is not manufactured by mind independent of the external world. Thus, nothing immaterial enters into the process of cognition which, as a process involving different material entities, is entirely governed by the mechanical laws of physical nature.

To sum up Roy's arguments, sensations are bodily events, causally connected with the external world. There is no interruption in the causal chain. Knowing as well perception takes place on the plane of direct physical contact. The causal chain throughout is physical, not logical. Therefore, all arguments of the subjectivist are irrelevant. Roy puts mind in direct contact with the external world. It is not a contact between two qualitatively different entities. Mind itself originates in the organic property of reaction to stimuli. So, the last link, cognition also

18. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

is a physical relation. Cognition, however, is not a tacit reception but intelligent reaction. It is an interpretative, demotative and selective act. It weaves the impressions of environment into a coherent mental picture of the physical reality, they represent.

Roy's conclusion is that experience is the foundation of knowledge. But knowing is not purely an empirical process. The empirical material is reduced to rational coherent explanation of perceptual facts. Knowledge results from the constant and continuous reference of percepts to their external resources. The fibres of the external world run into consciousness. Brain is composed of the end of the fibres. So, brain processes can be traced back along the fibres, to their physical causes in the remotest parts of the universe. Knowing is a matter of physical causality from contents of immediate experience outwards. Percepts are purely empirical entities whereas concepts are synthetics. The former are automatically given while the latter are consciously constructed. Knowledge is a conceptual scheme, born out of insight in the nature of things, gained through critical examination, rational co-ordination and logical deduction of perceptual data.

Roy's theory of knowledge does not make any distinction between appearance and reality. Consequently, the baffling problem of perception, in its turn, dispells all doubt about the objective validity of knowledge acquired through experience. This fundamental achievement in the realm of epistemology guarantees scientific philosophy against any idealist deviation.

Roy's theory of knowledge is far from complete. He fails to go into the difference between knowledge of things and knowledge of truth. Knowledge of things is knowledge of acquaintance, and as such is essentially simpler than any knowledge of truth, though it would be rash to assume that human beings ever, in fact, have acquaintance with things without at the same time knowing any truth about them. Knowledge of things by description, on the contrary, always involves, some knowledge of truth as its source and ground.

Roy falls into the error of behaviourism, which, in psychology, relies wholly upon external observations and never accepts data for which the evidence is entirely derived from introspection. It is not sound as a philosophy, though as a method it is

valuable. Alongwith the prejudice in favour of behaviourism, Roy shows another prejudice in favour of explanations in terms of physics wherever possible. From a cosmic point of view, life and experience are causally of little experience. In any empirical subject matter, a thorough understanding will reduce the more important causal laws to those of physics, but where the matter is very complex, the practical feasibility of reduction is doubtful.

Roy over-emphasises the concept of experience. He tends to think that only what is experienced can be known to exist and that it is meaningless to assert that something exist although one does not know them to exist. This sort of view gives too much importance to knowledge. Everybody, in fact, accepts innumerable propositions about things not experienced, but when people begin to philosophise, they seem to think it necessary to make themselves artificially stupid. It should be admitted that there are difficulties in explaining how one acquires knowledge that transcends experience, but the view that one has no such knowledge is utterly untenable. Roy may be right in thinking that there is no apriori method of proving the existence of things, but he fails to appreciate that there are forms of probable inference which must be accepted although they cannot be proved by experience.

Roy's theory is rendered difficult by the fact that it involves psychology, logic and the physical sciences, with the result that confusion is frequently noticed. One makes an unsuccessful attempt to find in Roy's theory of knowledge, a characteristic of complete process from stimulus to reaction. Roy thus confuses two problems which are quite distinct—that of knowledge and that of the nature of reality.

PHYSICAL REALISM

Roy's theory of knowledge leads him to approach materialism in terms of "Physical Realism."¹⁹ He considers this term more appropriate for co-ordinating the entire body of modern scientific knowledge into a logical system. The adject-

19. M. N. Roy, *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary : Letters From Jail*, Vol. III, p. 208.

tive 'dialectic' does not quite serve the purpose of meeting the situation created by the revolution in the concept of substance. The philosophical significance of modern science is that it is disputing the claim of philosophy to an autonomous existence. The problems of philosophy—cosmological, ontological, epistemological—can all be progressively solved only in the light of scientific knowledge. The function of philosophy is to explain existence as a whole. An explanation of existence requires knowledge of existence. Knowledge about the different phases of existence is gathered by the various branches of science. "The function of science is to describe; that of philosophy is to explain."²⁰ The function of philosophy is to co-ordinate the entire body of scientific knowledge into a comprehensive theory of nature and life.

The new physics abolishes the distinction between reality and appearance. Though the world of physics is metaphysical in the sense that entities composing it cannot be directly experienced, Roy does not regard them as *a priori* categories. The metaphysical foundation of new physics is a *posteriori* deduction. Roy is dead set against dualist doctrine, which came to be exploded by modern psychology aided by physiology. The old static conception of matter still stood on the way to the final solution. There appeared to be an unbridgeable gulf between the external world of ponderable matter and the world of mind. With the advent of dynamic concept of matter, new physics has successfully taken the last hurdle.

The modern theories of physics represent a tremendous advance upon the theories of classical physics. From it, Roy infers that 'Becoming' is the essence of 'Being.' The stuff of the world is not static but dynamic. It is never in an inert state. Wherever it is, it is in the state of becoming. In the absence of becoming, there is nothing. Being becomes real in becoming. As Roy thinks, "the dispute is not about the reality of the external world, but about the nature of the external world."²¹ The world of new physics is built on protons and electrons. They are constituent of the material particle—atom. It is made of an attenuated stuff which hovers on the boundary line between

20. Roy, *Science And Philosophy*, p. 31.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

matter and energy. Space is curved. Time has no independent existence. It is mixed up with space. Roy merges space, time and matter into a four dimensional continuum in which other is thrown out and events take place.

The theory of Relativity and the Quantum theory constitute Roy's new physics. Roy rebuts Bertrand Russell's contention that the theory of Relativity repudiates materialist natural philosophy in favour of idealism or any other school, antagonistic to materialism. On the other hand, it shows that a mechanistic view of the universe results from the technique of physical observation, measurement, and general principles deduced through rigorous mathematical analysis of the strictly verified data thus obtained. The theory of Relativity is claimed by Roy as "a great contribution to the victory of materialism."²² As a system of physical theories, it is not anti-thetical to but stands in relation of continuity with classical ideas of physics. The philosophical significance of new physics lies in the fact that it brings problems, hitherto considered to be metaphysical, within the compass of physical research. Such basic concepts as space, time, matter, causality etc., are no longer objects of speculative thought. Exact knowledge about their intrinsic nature and inner structure is being acquired through observation and experiments. Supporting Einstein that empty space is meaningless, Roy maintains that "space exists because material objects exist—as the distance between any two of them."²³ Similarly, there is no absolute time which flows in metaphysical void. The concept of time results from the physical fact of becoming. It is interval between two events.

For classical physics, matter was composed of atoms, which were supposed to have internal structure. New physics has not only analysed atoms into protons and electrons, but has ascertained the quantitative value of these newly discovered units of the physical world. The old physical concept of substance is accessible to experience and can be measured mathematically. All mysteries about space and time disappeared in consequence of the discovery that they enter human experience as relative entities. Their absoluteness is, indeed, an empty concept.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Mysticism results from the attempt to define absolute. The absolute, if it is really absolute, must be indefinable. The theory of Relativity solves the vexatious problem of time and space by exposing the meaninglessness of the absolutist, ideal concept of times categories.

The new physics compels to change a prior metaphysical concept in accordance with experienced facts. The theory of Relativity as more than a theory of physics in the technical sense. Roy finds in it "a cosmological conception."²⁴ Consequently, its epistemological significance is very far-reaching. Emerging as a comprehensive system of philosophy, it ceases to be a closed system of speculative thought by providing a harmonious explanation of all observed natural phenomena in the light of empirical knowledge.

The Quantum theory, on the contrary, opens up a new field of physical investigation. The basic units of the physical world have been discovered to possess the property of waves as well as of particles. It is extremely difficult to grasp the new conception of substance, which absorbs matter and energy into a dynamic, unitary, primordial physical being, constituting the background of all the phenomena of nature. Being highly abstract, it cannot be conceived in terms of every day experience. Hence, the theories of atomic physics appear to be mental construction, expressed in obscure mathematical language.

Roy reads too much in quantum physics. He ignores that "atoms and their constituents have proved inaccessible to attempts at explaining them in terms of cause and effect; their structure, behaviour, different life period, and their very existence defy such explanations."²⁵ It may not be forgotten that quantum physics had dethroned causality and destroyed belief in it. Here, Roy is up against the old problems of philosophy—the problem of perception. The theories of new physics are not derived from direct perception. On the other hand, any abstraction contains a large subjective element. Roy attempts to get out of this dilemma by integrating these subjective consti-

24. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

25. Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory : The Foundations of Twentieth Century Political Thought*, Bombay : The Times of India Press, 1965, p. 76.

contact between the two, and knowledge would be impossible. Matter does not exist in space. On the other hand, space is a function of matter. Matter and energy are the dual manifestations of substance, which enters one's experience in manifested tuments into the complex of the objective physical world. If mind was essentially different from matter, there could be no possible forms. Paradoxically, matter is not something which exists in space and changes in time. It is the sole existence, which is realised in its transformation into multitudinous patterns. In the absence of the matter, there will be neither space nor time. Matter is an objective category. Self-sufficient objectivity is the ultimate reality. It is ontologically real. Its epistemological reality logically follows.

Roy oversimplifies the matter. What has actually evolved in quantum physics is something else. It has been found that microcosmic occurrences cannot be revealed by human observation beyond a limiting point, because factors that are inevitably connected with the observational procedure so greatly influence microsmic events that what one observes is the effect of one's disturbing interference rather than the occurrence without that effect. It is, therefore, not possible fully to explore microcosmic structure and events. Only the tremendous number of atoms and their constituents and velocity of their movements permit the calculation of the results of their combined behaviour in process that are sensorially observable. The regularities of these observable can, then, be scientifically explained only with the aid of the laws of probability through statistical laws and not through recognisable causal laws.

This raises the problem of probability in relation to determinism. For Roy, determinism and probability are not mutually exclusive. Probability is the dynamic view of determinism. As long as predictions can be made, and events happen approximately as predicted, the principle of physical determinism stands. Relying on modern scientific discoveries with all its obvious deficiencies, Roy presents the picture of self-operative physical nature, which knows no beginning and no end.

The basic principle of 'Physical Realism' as propounded by Roy is that the world, physically as well as biologically exists objectively, and that it is self-contained and self-explained. There is nothing beyond it; its being and becoming are governed by

laws inherent in itself. But the development is towards a greater and greater complexity. The laws themselves, being inherent in the process, are modified in the course of development. The physical universe is not a gigantic clock. It is self-operative and self-adjusting growth. Roy's 'Physical Realism' adopts mechanistic cosmology with physical determinism as its fundamental principles. Determinism means that "the world is a movement which knows no stoppage and permits no reversal."²⁶ This way, Roy solves the old problem of psycho-physical parallelism in materialist philosophy. The assertion of human creativeness pre-supposes recognition of the reality of the physical world. If the physical world is dismissed as unreal, then man's own existence ceases to be a reality. Realism becomes the philosophical foundation of science when the reality of the physical world is conceived as independent of any other existence.

In trying to resolve the psycho-physical parallelism, Roy overlooks one of the fundamental differences between physics and psychology. Physics treats as a unit the whole system of appearances themselves. Psychology is concerned eventually with actual particulars, not merely with systems of particulars. In this it differs from physics which, broadly speaking, is concerned with the cases in which all the particulars which make up one physical object can be treated as a single causal unit, rather the particulars which are sufficiently near the object of which they are appearances can be so treated. The laws which psychology seeks cannot be so stated since the particulars themselves are what interests the psychologist. This is one of the fundamental differences between physics and psychology, which Roy fails to overcome while resolving the psycho-physical parallelism.

Roy's analysis of law-governed universe is not at all convincing. In the first place, it is very doubtful whether Roy is scientifically justified in saying except figuratively that the phenomena of nature are ruled by general laws, and that nature obeys or follows these laws, for he cannot state scientifically that general laws are something separate from the behaviour of nature. As far as scientific knowledge goes, they may well be

26. M. N. Roy, "Probability And Determinism," *The Humanist Way*, Vol. IV, No. 3, 1950, p. 247.

nothing but the ways of nature, as described by man in general terms. But it is certainly not warranted to say that nature, in her obedience to general laws, behaves logically. If nature behaves differently from what Roy expects under the general propositions which he calls general laws, then the trouble is not that nature acts illogically but that the alleged general laws are not general, that they need modification or scrapping. Likewise, when nature behaves in line with human expectations, it is not because she performs logically, but because to that extent the general laws describe the behaviour of nature correctly. When men die, it is not because they behave logically under the general proposition that all men are mortal, but because this proposition expresses the actual phenomena correctly. Stars are not ill-behaved if they deviate from their expected course, but men's descriptive formula has been incorrect. "The order of nature cannot be justified by the mere observation of nature."²⁷ Sometimes the behaviour of nature seems indeed to be highly illogical. It is for men to deduce the implications, and watch whether all implications are in line with nature's actual behaviour. It is not for nature to keep in line with the descriptive general statements. Roy while finding logic in nature, strikes more dogmatic than scientific.

PHILOSOPHY CONSEQUENCES.

Roy's 'Physical Realism' is tantamount to a re-statement of materialism with all its philosophical consequences. This enables Roy to evolve a philosophy of history. "Human history, like natural history, is a determined process. But it is self-determined, and it is not absolute determinism. There are more than one determining factor and they mutually limit their role of operation."²⁸ Emerging from the Marxian phase, Roy finds fault with the materialist conception of history which dismisses ideal systems and ideologies as mere superstructures of economic relations, and tries to relate them directly with the material conditions of life. As modified by Roy, the logical development of ideas and the generation of new forces take place simul-

28. *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 287.

taneously together providing the motive force of history. But in no given period can they be causally connected except in the sense that action is always motivated by ideas. A new idea must be referred back to an old idea. Philosophy has a history of its own, and it is not a kaleidoscope of phantoms. In as much as action is motivated by ideas, determinism in history is primarily ideal. Historical determinism collapses by ignoring the dynamics of ideas.

In this re-statement of materialism, Roy recognises "the decisive importance of ideas in all the process of human evolution—historical, social, political and cultural."²⁹ From time to time, the march of history is obstructed by the requirements of the established social order, which sets a limit to human creativeness, mental as well as physical. The urge for progress and freedom asserts itself with a renewed vigour to break down the obstacle. A new social order, conducive to a less hampered unfolding of human potentialities, is visualised by men, embodying the liberating ideas and cultural values created in the past. A new philosophy is born out of the spiritual heritage of mankind to herald a reorganisation of society. While recognising the creative role of the environment, Roy does not deny the objective reality of ideas. Priority belongs to the physical being, to matter. But "once the biologically determined process of ideation is complete, ideas are formed, they continue to have autonomous existence, an evolutionary process of their own, which runs parallel to the physical process of human evolution."³⁰ One finds in Roy's restatement two parallel processes, ideal and physical, composing the process of social evolution. Both are determined by their respective logic, and at the same time influencing each other. That is how history becomes an organic process.

This clearly shows how Roy abandons doctrinaire position, and advocates a synthesis between idealism and materialism. By merging psychology into physiology, Roy bridges the gulf between physics and psychology, and thereby, reconciles the dynamics of matter with the dynamics of ideas. Matter is indestructible; so are ideas. Identity of idea and being implies

29. "Philosophy of History," *The Marxian Way*, Vol. II, No. 3, 1947, p. 254.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

the notion of their co-existence. "If thought is identical with being," argues Roy, "then, it must be admitted that consciousness in which thought originates is not conditional on life; that there is such thing as cosmic consciousness, co-existent with physical universe."³¹ The difference between Roy and Marx is obvious. Roy's notion of identity emerges into co-existence of thought with physical being, and cancels the Marxist doctrine that ideological systems are mere super-structure of economic relations. The recognition of the decisive role played by ideas runs counter neither to the rationalist notion of progress nor to the mechanistic view of evolution. Roy's synthesis absorbs idealism and goes beyond by tracing the roots of ideas in the rational scheme of nature. Thus, idealism flows into materialism. The origin of ideas is ascribed by Roy to pre-human biological impulse while the biological evolution, in turn, takes place in the context of physical nature. In the discovery of the physical origin of mental phenomena, Roy finds the solution of the problem of dualism, which has baffled philosophy through the ages.

Roy's synthesis is a combination of conceptual thought and empirical knowledge. Both have a common foundation. Conceptual thought is generalisation of an abstraction from experience. Scientific thinking is stimulated by empirical knowledge. This enables Roy to remove the defect of classical materialism, which did not seem to have any connection with ethics. By tracing the roots of rationality through the entire process of biological evolution, Roy turns rationalism into physical determinism. Thus, mechanistic cosmology gives birth to rationalistic ethics. This re-statement of materialism becomes the basis of Roy's Radical Humanism. Freed thus from Marxian determinism, Roy proposes a reorganisation of Indian society which can retain the values of liberal tradition, and yet lead to higher material standards.

Roy's re-statement of materialism is open to serious objection. Materialism is unable to explain consciousness, and is refuted on scientific grounds by psychology and physiology, which show that the world studied by physics is a world dependent on one's mode of perception, not a world existing inde-

31. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

pendently of its own account. If Roy's physical determinism is true, then, all its manifestations in human and animal behaviour will be such as an ideally skilful physicist could calculate from purely physical data. Under these circumstances, a man will be, for all practical purposes, an automation, since his mental life can only be communicated to others or displayed in action by physical means. Even his thoughts can be inferred from physics unless he is content never to give utterances to them.

It may be argued against Roy that man only knows about matter through its appearance. What a man sees depends not only upon what is there to be seen, but also upon the eye, the optic nerve, and the brain. In this way, Roy's 'Physical Realism' through physiology, is driven back to sensationalism. If it is to escape sensationalism, it must abandon the empirical scientific method, substituting for it the dogmatism of an apriori metaphysics, which professes to know what is behind appearance. Historically, materialism may be regarded as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. The materialist dogma has not been set up by Roy, not that he loves dogma, but because he feels that nothing less definite would enable him to fight the dogma he dislikes. Roy's materialism more and more gives way to scepticism.

The essence of Roy's re-statement subsists in the reality of physical laws. The theory of relativity, by merging time into space-time, has damaged the traditional notion of substance more than all the arguments of Roy. A piece of matter has become, not a persistent thing with varying states, but a system of inter-related events. Roy's adherence to old solidity represents old prejudice. This doubt cannot but be increased when Roy passes to biology and psychology. It does not mean that there is any positive evidence against physical law in this region. It is only meant that the evidence in its favour is less strong, because fewer laws are known, and prediction is as yet only possible within narrow limits. The discovery of quanta in physics shows how rash it is to dogmatise as to the further surprises which even an advanced science may have in store. Psychology is by no means an advanced science.

In the present condition of human knowledge, therefore, either to assert or to deny the universal reign of law is a mark

of prejudice. The rational man will regard the question as open. As a practical maxim of scientific method, Roy's re-statement of materialism may be accepted if it means that the goal of every science is to be merged in physics. But it must be added that physics itself is not materialistic in the old sense, since it no longer assumes matter as permanent substance. And it must also be remembered that there is no good reason to suppose materialism metaphysically true. It is a point of view which has hitherto proved useful in research, and is likely to continue useful wherever new scientific laws are being discovered, but which may not well cover the whole field, and cannot be regarded as definitely true without a wholly unwarranted dogmatism.

However, Roy's re-statement of materialism becomes a gospel of action as a great and potential cause in the world. Nature is first to be observed, but, having been observed, the laws of nature become the property and servants of man. As a scientific philosophy of Indian politics, Roy's re-statement of materialism does not seek to restrain and circumscribe activity, but aims at the liberation of action through the directive agency of intelligence.

CHAPTER VI

EMERGENCE OF INDIAN RADICAL HUMANISM

Materialism as re-stated by Roy, constitutes the basis of Radical Humanism, propounded by him in the background of Indian conditions. As an answer to the forces of regeneration, Roy presents it as the philosophy of 20th Century Indian Renaissance.

A NEW RENAISSANCE.

The Renaissance movement in Europe, which was a philosophical child of the rising middle-class, had appeared as a forerunner of the various revolutions, sweeping that continent. In India, a similar movement would have taken root but for the intervention of British imperialism, which destroyed the progressive economic forces just appearing on the Indian horizon in the form of native middle-class with its prosperous trade and industry, and, which would have necessarily given birth to the movement of new thought. The Indian Renaissance was deprived of native origin; it lacked the vigour and buoyancy of the European Renaissance.

It was, indeed, a bold step on the part of the British rulers to have brought the western education within the reach of the Indians. Judged from the point of view of the native culture and traditions, the first generation of the modern educated intelligentsia could be called de-nationalised, because they were more English than Indian. Their religion was the religion of Spencer and Comte, their philosophy that of Bentham and Mill. But they were first rebels boldly raising a voice challenging the older order of things, and heralding the birth of a new India, which could not come into existence without shattering the still cherished religious and social ideals, and institutions of old. Here, ends the first stage of the Indian Renaissance movement, the period of its rise. Then follows the period of attempted synthesis between the old and the new.

The synthetic tendency becomes first visible in the various

movements of the Nineteenth Century. Christianity which had become shorn of its superstitions by the end of the Eighteenth Century, appeared polished and attractive to many an Indian intellectual. The leaders¹ of the then Indian thought, therefore, began to rationalise the Hindu religion with their utmost vigour. The establishment of the Brahmo-Samaj, the Arya Samaj and Prarthana Samaj—after the model of Christianity points to the same thing. In matters, social and political, they had the progressive outlook, and were eager to remodel Indian society on rational basis.

At the close of the Nineteenth Century begins its third stage, which can be traced as a period of its grim struggle with the force of native reaction. These forces were led by Ram Krishna, Vivakanand and Ramtirth in the north, Tilak in Maharashtra and Mrs. Besant in the South. These leaders, who were afterwards joined by Aurobindo Ghose, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal by the beginning of the Twentieth Century, were the prophets of Hindu nationalism. They were firm believers in the cultural superiority of Indian people, and held the view that the new Indian nation should be built on the basis of old Indian culture.

Here, one gets the answer why the Indian freedom movement had taken so much time to reach its goal despite the fact that India had been objectively ripe for the long overdue revolution. The most outstanding feature of the Indian nationalism had been its lack of proper ideological foundation. Indians could not be expected to move forward unless they were freed from the feudal influence and patriarchal customs, which were hostile to modern political concepts. The task before India was to accomplish the work, already begun by the progressive thinkers of the Nineteenth Century India. M. N. Roy appeared on the scene with his philosophy of Radical Humanism. Like Ranade, he believed that "the captive of the past can never conquer the future."² A thing is to be accepted, not because a Marx or Manu had said it but on the ground of reason. The spirit of not taking anything on trust is the hallmark of spiritual

1. Sophia Dohson Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, Calcutta; A. C. Sarkar & Co., 1913, p. 155.

2. M. N. Roy, *Science and Superstition*, Dehradun : Indian Renaissance Association, 1940, p. 164.

liberation. Roy established a close relation between the Renaissance movement and the anti-imperialist struggle, the two aspects of the same battle for freedom. "A political revolution takes place as a prelude to a social renaissance. If the historical necessity of a social renaissance is not admitted, political revolution becomes a matter of idle talk."³ If the national state is going to be the instrument for the preservation of the established social order, or for revival of older institutions, it will not be a political revolution. Actually, Roy was a staunch opponent of revivalism, preached in the name of a Golden Age in the past.

For Roy, the Renaissance broadly meant the revolt of man against all the fetters, spiritual and temporal, that restricted his freedom as man. He, therefore, preached revolt "against authority, revolt against tradition, revolt against the intolerable conditions of life."⁴ Roy's renaissance takes the form of philosophical revolution to be brought about by the growth of scientific knowledge. This will enable India to outgrow the religious mode of thought, which is no more immutable for her than it was for the European community. Condemning revivalism as counter-reformation, Roy criticises those, who talk about renaissance, and yet propose to return to "Ramraj."⁵ Regeneration of man is the essence of Roy's renaissance. It aims to free man from otherworldiness, enabling him to take joy in this life, not treating it as a waiting room on some junction railway station.

Roy suggests two things for the overdue Indian Renaissance to happen, namely, a critical appreciation of the past, and willingness to benefit from the common human heritage. Spiritual aggressiveness comes in the way of the first. "Toleration for strange things, the attempt to understand them, freedom from prejudice, faculty of observation, ability to think in abstract—all these qualities . . . go into the meaning of philosophi-

3. "Renaissance and Revolution," *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 9, 1937, p. 3.

4. "Culture in East and West," *Independent India*, Vol. I, No. 43, p. II.

5. "Indian Renaissance," *Independent India*, Vol. XII, No. 22, 1948. p. 261.

cal outlook.”⁶ A critical study of past establishes the desirability of democratic way of life to be adopted in the present. A necessary condition for the Renaissance of India is the liberation of the objectively progressive forces from the prejudices of ‘glorious past.’ If traditional ideas and ideals check progress, they may be abandoned. This critical approach to history will rescue the positive contribution of Indian culture. It may become possible if facts are distinguished from fiction. Roy warns against the misplaced loyalty to the tradition, which kills incentive to progress.

Another pre-condition is to share the common human heritage. Knowledge is not parochial, and truth is universal. Roy, therefore, pleads that the spirit of the Renaissance should be to welcome knowledge wherever one finds it, and to welcome truth even if it reveals as untrue what has been maintained so far. This will make intellectual life dynamic, and unless it is effective, the national freedom will remain meaningless for the majority of the Indian people. Roy dismisses the belief that the materialistic culture of the West is foreign to the special genius of India. On the contrary, the secular achievements of the West are not beyond the reach of the Indian people. As such, the legacy of spiritualist genius is not an asset but a liability, and becomes the obverse of the doctrine of the white man’s burden.

Thus, the Renaissance in India will take place under the banner of a philosophy, in which, reason will function as arbiter in all disputes in the field of knowledge and values. Roy advocates a new Renaissance, which will be based on rationalism, individualism and cosmopolitanism, and, which is essential for democracy to be realised and is capable of defending itself. And, for it, he endeavours to propound the philosophy of Radical Humanism, which links up social and political practice with a scientific metaphysics and ethics.

RADICAL HUMANISM.

Humanism is, however, not a new ideal; it is, perhaps, as

6. M. N. Roy, *The Historical Role of Islam*, Calcutta : Renaissance Publishers, 1958, pp. 18-19.

7. M. N. Roy, “Pre-conditions of Indian Renaissance,” *Marxian Way*, Vol. III, No. 4, 1948-49, p. 363.

old as human philosophy. The imperishable contribution of the Greeks lies in the taming of man and nature through reason. Sophists represent the transition from the physicist to the humanists. The sophists destroyed the faith "in the gods and goddesses of Olympus, and in the moral codes that had taken its sanction so largely from the fear, men had for these ubiquitous and innumerable deities."⁸ Against the contention of Sophists that morality is simply social convention, Plato and Aristotle argued that there are certain universals and absolute principles of goodness and justice which man, by virtue of his reason, can discover if he will. A therapeutic view of man's case was taken by Stoics and Epicureans, who had agreed in saying that man had his cure in his own hands, although they had radically disagreed on diagnosis and prescription. The purpose of Epicureanism was to produce in its students a state of self-sufficiency, whereas Stoicism not only exalted the life of reason but it emphasised the essential equality of all men.

It was through Stoicism, rather than through Platonism, that Greek philosophy was introduced into the Roman World. The Stoic conception of the universal community in which all men are brothers was given spiritual content by the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God. The humanist is not a christian, stripped of his christian expectations. In Petrarca and Erasmus, unquestionably good christians, life as lived and felt by all, rather than as thought by the philosophers, comes into its own hand. In the Enlightenment, the christian humanism of Erasmus triumphed over the Lutheran and Calvinistic sense of utter dependence on God, with its tendency to annihilate the humanity of man by diminishing its status. Erasmus was "the greatest humanist of the Renaissance."⁹ Erasmus had always longed for the liberal and human version of the classics. The control of the church over the mind of man gradually weakened, and the individual began to assert his intellectual independence. Reason supplanted authority in philosophy, and the belief began to prevail that truth is something to be won by free and impartial inquiry instead of decreed by authority. This revolt against

8. Will Durrant, *The Story of Philosophy*, London : Ernest Benn, 1948, p. 28.

9. Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West*, London : Macdonald, 1960, pp. 178-179.

authority which characterised the period of European Renaissance, necessitated the search for some substitute method of arriving at knowledge. "Modern natural science is the daughter of Humanism."¹⁰ Natural science acquired its decisive influence upon the development of modern philosophy.

Humanism emerged as a critique of satisfaction in Hume, who was overjoyed at the rout of the whole train of monkish virtues, a more popular manifestations of the humanism of the age than abandonment of the ideal of 'God like knowledge,' enthroned by Plato and Aristotle. But the confidence and purpose of the Enlightenment were founded on the modern empiricism of Newton and Locke.

In East, one finds evidence of humanism in Buddhism and Confuciusism. To compare Buddhism with Stoicism, it may be observed that Stoicism accepts a patheistic world, while Buddhism in a way rejects an atheistic natural world. Buddhism no more than Stoicism believes that subjectivity is in any way supernatural. They both end in moral predicament common to certain forms of naturalism—Stoicism in holding that the natural world determines human existence yet leaving part of human existence free; Buddhism in holding that the natural world determines human existence although claiming that some kind of humanity is in some sense outside human existence.

Establishing the cosmic quality of human nature, Confucius develops the theme that "by being true to his own inner self, man will naturally exhibit those qualities of true greatness on which the social order depends for stability."¹¹ The aim of Confucius is the establishment of a new order in society by straightening out the ideas and habits of leaders and common people on the fundamental character building, social obligations and decent government. The catalogue of Confuciusian virtues includes uprightness, benevolence, conscientiousness, righteousness and filial piety. All these virtues reflect human heartedness of Confucius. The objective in his training of youngmen is ability to govern wisely. 'Harmony is to be established and

10. W. Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, Trans. James H. Tufts. New York : Macmillan, 1960, p. 351.

11. Clarence Burton Day, *The Philosophers of China : Classical and Contemporary*, London : Peter Owen, 1962, p. 38.

maintained only by moral example. 'Golden Mean' can be achieved within the human spirit.

Humanism in the strict sense is justified by its production in every generation of its quota of just men. If one looks round amongst declared humanists living today, and takes the liberty to naming Jean Paul Sartre, and looks back at those recently dead and names Gilbert Murray, John Dewey, M. N. Roy and Bertrand Russell, these are not merely the names of men of great gifts and achievements, they are the names of many sided human beings of more than ordinary candour and public spirit who have lived and spent themselves in the human cause.

Roy's Radical Humanism revolves round man. It considers him not only as the object of all social institutions but also the principal agent responsible for all social progress. It is the man who creates society, state and other institutions, and values for his own welfare.¹² Man has the power to change them for his greater welfare and convenience. Roy's humanism rejects all theories, which consider the evolution of human history as an inevitable, automatic process, determined either by providential will or by economic forces, or by any other mystic entity. It accepts the dictum of Protagoras—man is the measure of everything—as fundamental.

In the evolution of his philosophy, Roy is influenced by the scientific materialism of Hobbes, whom he considers as the only thinker of his time to have developed a system of universal philosophy, embracing the phenomena of body (physical nature), man and state.¹³ Equally there is imprint of Spinoza's philosophy, which Roy considers rigorously determinist as any non-metaphysical naturalism should be.¹⁴ The concept of free will in man is founded on the assumption of a universal will. Spinoza's ethics, which is the most significant part of his philosophy, is based upon the harmony of the concept of necessity and freedom. Roy seems to be impressed by Locke, who demands secularism of politics, not only in theory, but also in

12. "New Humanism and the Radical Humanist Movement," *Independent India*, Vol. XIII, No. 13, 1949, p. 154.

13. M. N. Roy, "Metaphysics of Morals and Social Philosophy," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVI, No. 34, 1952, p. 406.

14. "World Crisis and New Approach," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIX, No. 36, 1955, p. 428.

practice. The cumulative effect of these philosophers is found in Roy's efforts to reconcile on the one hand, a rationalist metaphysics with a mechanistic cosmology and, on the other hand, the idea of freedom with the concept of necessity. Roy was specially interested in the problems of society but he realised that, in as much as man is the product of natural evolution, human nature is to be treated with reference to physical nature. The central purpose of Roy's Radical Humanism is to co-ordinate the philosophy of nature with a social philosophy and ethics in a monistic system. It is precisely for this reason that Roy claims it "humanist as well as materialist, naturalist as well as rationalist, creativist as well as determinist."¹⁵ To differentiate his humanism from other humanist philosophies, Roy uses the qualifying 'Radical' or 'New' before the word 'Humanism.' It is new because it is humanism enriched and reinforced by the scientific knowledge and social experience, gained by modern civilisation. Roy prefers the idea of radical because it goes to the root of the problem of the origin of human being. It is scientific and integral because it conceives human sovereignty as a differentiation from the mechanistic process of nature, but as their highest product. The human being is taken not in the context of society but of the whole universe. An integrated picture of modern science leads to an integral scientific humanism. Roy treats man as a biological phenomena, and builds axiology on this foundation, deducing all values from it. It gives rise to materialist monism, when applied to the problems of social existence, is called Radical Humanism..

Roy's humanism rests its ethics on the rationality of man. Conscious of his innate rationality, man as man can be moral. Political practice, being a form of humanist activity, can, therefore, be guided by moral principles. Humanism, in the words of Roy, is "the old doctrine of human sovereignty and dignity informed by modern science."¹⁶ As a part of speculative philosophy, ethics refused to recognise its secular sanction revealed by the light of biological knowledge, and failed to find its roots in man himself. On the other hand, social and political philo-

15. *New Humanism*, p. 50.

16. "New Humanism and the Radical Humanist Movement," *Loc. cit.*

sophy came under the influence of rationalism. It seemed that there was no causal relation between ethical values and world of science. Moral philosophy was baffled by the problem of deducing values from facts. Social behaviour and political events, also being empirical facts, appeared to be beyond the jurisdiction of axiology. Religion, in the last analysis, remained the only sanction of morality. Scientific knowledge liberates man from the time-honoured prejudices about the essence of his being and the purpose of life. Radical Humanism, on the authority of modern science, maintains that a rational and moral society is possible. In so far it shows a way out of present crisis, it is a political philosophy. Its metaphysics is physical realist, and its cosmology is mechanistic. It is deduced from a general philosophy of nature, including the world of matter and mind. Conceptual thought and sense perceptions are harmonised in its epistemology.

By tracing will and reason, emotion and intelligence to their common biological origin, Radical Humanism reconciles the romantic doctrine of revolution, that man makes history with rationalist action of orderly and social progress. It holds that, for creating a new world of liberty and social justice, revolution must go beyond an economic reorganisation of society. The urge for freedom being the basic incentive of life, the purpose of all human endeavour must be to strive for the removal of social conditions which restrict the unfolding of the potentialities of man. The crisis of the modern world is deeper than just an economic or a political crisis. As analysed by Roy, "it is a moral crisis, affecting the inner most core of human existence in all its manifestations. It is the loss of natural moral moorings."¹⁷ The need of the hour is a philosophy which will restore confidence in the creativity of man. Then only, when man's faith in himself is restored, can he start to remake his world.

Roy, thus, develops a political philosophy based on ethics, forming a part of the scientific view of the universe. The effort is bold one, and betrays a hard-headed optimism even in the midst of the deepening human crisis. As a political philosophy, Radical Humanism covers a wide range in which the study of

17. "World Crisis and New Approach," *Loc. cit.*

human nature, society and state, ethics and politics, and his conception of politics without power, occupy unique position.

However, one finds several gaps in Roy's Radical Humanism, which can be used in more than one sense. In its broadest meaning, it sets off any method that is considered 'scientific' from any other that is considered 'non-scientific,' without indicating what makes it such. When used this way, the term designates a problem—the problem of what is scientific—rather than answer to it.

Scientific method must not be understood as a merely mechanical procedure of indiscriminately gathering data and of processing them in line with prescribed steps, leaving every progress to assiduity and little if anything to genius. Rather the opposite is true. Roy may find it difficult to answer. Neither knowledge nor assiduity can replace the part played by the creative mind; nor does it tell a person how to be creative. Moreover, scientific approach makes first and greatest concession to common sense because it is unable by the formal steps of its own procedure to prove that consubjectivity exists. This it pre-supposes, or rather permits the scientist to accept. The freedom of the scientist to accept self-observation for what it can offer does not entitle him to assume that what he observes within himself, and what he finds corroborated by reports of others, occurs in essential similarity within all human beings. Whether and in what circumstances he is justified in drawing this inference from introspection is an entirely separate question.

Roy overlooks the psychological truth that belief or faith plays a powerful role also in science. It often determines the acceptance by the scientist of reports on empirical observations. Roy's missionary zeal for Radical Humanism is more emotional than scientific, though it is not devoid of logic. But logical reasoning is accepted as full proof by scientific method when, and only when, it is strictly analytic. It is analytic when it adds nothing to the meaning of a given term or proposition, but merely makes explicit what is implied in that meaning. Clarity and unambiguity of all terms used are the first requirement of logical reasoning. Most words are ambiguous; they cover a great variety of facts or values, or both. This is especially so in the political field, where terms such as freedom,

equality, democracy, socialism, power, and authority carry different meanings. Radical Humanism is no exception to it.

HUMAN NATURE.

The study of human nature occupies important place in Roy's Radical Humanism. It reveals reason as one of its basic traits; the other is urge for freedom.

Human nature is the product of two factors, namely, first, man's emergence as the highest product of the evolutionary process of the mechanical and, therefore, law-governed universe, and, secondly, his animal ancestry. The history of the infancy and adolescence of the human species coincides with the process of biological evolution. Just as life is the red thread running through the whole process of biological evolution, similarly there is a residue of humanness underlying the process even before it has gone beyond the borderland where the primitive man is still not fully differentiated from his animal ancestry. "The origin of humanness, therefore, antedates the origin of species."¹⁸ The physical universe is a cosmos; living nature is a part of that law-governed system. It logically follows that the process of organic evolution is also determined. Taking place in the context of the law-governed physical universe, biological evolution is also a rational process. Life is neither an inexplicable category called intuition, nor is it a mysteriously purposive urge. It is a determined physical process. "In metaphysical terms," says Roy, "it is the unfolding of reason in nature."¹⁹ Reason is simple, instinctive notion that every object of experience is connected with some other object or objects which may or may not have been already experienced. Consciousness being the property of life in the zoological world, it means to be aware of the environments. Simple awareness is presently supplemented by reactions to things of which the organism becomes aware. From that stage of biological evolution, there begins the growth of the nervous system to serve as the means of inter-relations between the organism and its environ-

18. M. N. Roy, "Human Nature," *The Marxian Way*, Vol. III, No. 1, 1947-48, pp. 49-50.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

ment. The growth culminates in the formation of the brain which, physiologically, is called the mind. Whereas thought is a reaction to simple awareness, mind represents the highest expression, called consciousness. The mind becomes conscious of the environments, the radius of which gradually expands until the entire nature is embraced. It being consciousness of a law-governed system, Roy finds human mind necessarily rational in process. In other words, the intellectual and spiritual life of the primitive man was conditioned by the elemental instinct of reason. Conceptual thought distinguishes the mind of savage from that of anthropoid ape. The step from that mental state to the human mind, capable of conceptual thought is long. The causal chain of mental evolution, however, is not broken. Memory is the ultimate basis of conceptual thought—thinking stimulated by man's being—an integral part of law-governed physical universe.

Thus, Roy derives human rationality from the rationality of the physical universe. The law-governedness and orderliness of the physical universe may be called reason in nature. Consciousness is the function of organic matter. Subjective rationality is intimately related to objective rationality. "The reason in man is an echo of the harmony of the universe."²⁰ This rationality of man, therefore, is secular in character, and is not to be confused with any mysterious spark in human beings.

Dismissing transcendentalism, Roy traces the reasoning power of man behind all forms of human thought, ancient and modern. Religion is the refuge of the frustrated rationalism of the savage. But with the passage of time, "experience reinforces reason, and man attains intellectual adolescence."²¹ Roy is aware of the danger of dogmatism, when in the absence of positive knowledge, man is forced to make hypothesis, which he tends to think as absolute truth. This creates obstacle on the way to progress. The remedy lies in making man increasingly conscious of his innate rationality.

However, Roy exaggerates the role of reason when he states that every human behaviour, in the last analysis, is rational,

20. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 36.

21. M. N. Roy, "The Rhythm of the Cosmos," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 14-15, 1952, p. 170.

however irrational it may appear. He goes to the extreme by relating goodness to reason, and describing such qualities as emergent values. Reason cannot claim to be the exclusive source of values in life. If reason is to be the sole guide, the only intelligible attitude towards the riddle of existence is agnosticism. Human knowledge is conditioned by nature and limitations of human faculties, and there is nothing outside the man and the products of his mind by which its final truth can ever be tested. This makes Roy agnostic, and, it reduces his rationalism to agnosticism.

Yet, Roy is not out of woods. By relating reason to physical universe, Roy makes his thesis untenable. The physical system is law-governed, whereas human will and volition defy such laws in their operations. Between the world of man and world of inanimate nature, there lies the vast world of biological evolution. The latter has its own specific law, which, however, can be referred back to the general laws of the world of dead matter. Consciousness appears at a much later stage. Therefore, human will cannot be directly related to the laws of the physical universe. It is rooted in the intervening biological world. The obvious paradox in Roy's position is that reason is the cause as well as the result of the physical universe, of which, man is an integral part of his mind, intelligence and will. Roy takes extreme position in applying laws of physical determinism to human beings—a difficult task, indeed.

Roy falls into the error of Benthamite psychology by dwelling on reason to the exclusion of instincts. Without instincts, actions would be impossible, since the most calculated deliberations are merely means to ends, which are determined by instincts. Without these tendencies, the human organism would "lie inert and motionless like a wonderful clock work whose mainspring has been removed or a steam-engine whose fires had been drawn."²² The irrational in man is not supplementary or subordinate to his reason, but, indeed the more potent and compelling force that determines his behaviour.

Roy is oblivious of the fact that only in quiet times, people get on well with rational conception without conscious theories

22. William MacDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, Strand: Mathew & Co., 1960., p. 11.

of any sort. The Nineteenth Century was such a period, and it is not surprising that faith in reason, and in free institutions seemed so strong. In times of unrest and social convulsions such as the world has lived through since the war of 1914-18, this faith weakens, and the place of rational conception is taken by various myths which, in spite of man's apparent sophistications, have never been far below the level of his consciousness. In such conditions, values are merely emotional consequence of certain ideas. Reason may speculate freely, and may do so also to good practical purposes, but it cannot lead to any definite statement about things beyond the possibilities of sensual experiences. Human motivation is complex, and cannot be correctly explained by the monistic interpretation of Roy.

The second trait of human nature, according to Roy, is urge for freedom, which followed from man's animal ancestry. Among animals, the most significant impulse is the impulse for existence. In man, this urge has a wider meaning. He not only wants to exist but he also aspires to unfold all the potentialities latent in him. "The struggle for existence on the human level, when carried on according to a conscious will and intelligently, becomes the urge for freedom."²³ It is a continuation of the biological struggle on a higher level. It is the progressive disappearance of manifold impediments to the unfolding of the potentialities biologically inherent in man.

Man tries to find out the laws of nature in order to realise his freedom. As man's knowledge of nature increases, he can increasingly free himself from the tyranny of natural phenomena, and change the physical environment. Thus, urge for freedom leads man to a search for knowledge. In that process, he solves another problem, the problem of truth—the content of man's knowledge. Roy deduces all values from the supreme value of freedom. The humanist axiology finds expression in quest for freedom, knowledge and truth, explaining all aspects of existence—material, mental and moral.

The above analysis reveals that rationality and will to freedom constitute Roy's conception of human nature. One supplies dynamism and the other gives direction. The urge for freedom

23. M. N. Roy, "The Individual and Society," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVIII, No. 44, 1954, p. 522.

is essentially a romantic urge, an impetus craving for the desirable. But reason is a moderating force as it shows what is possible under the existing conditions. "Romanticism tempered with reason, and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure, pave the road to successful revolution."²⁴ The interaction of reason and freedom leads to the expression of co-operative spirit as manifested in social relationship. Roy's Radical Humanism culminates into co-operative individualism.

Two facts about this position may be noted. In the first place, Roy confuses two distinct notions. One is that all coercion is, in so far as it frustrates human desires, has as such greater evils, which non-interference, which is the opposite of coercion is good as such. This is the negative conception of liberty in its classical form. The other is that man should seek to discover the truth, and that truth can be found only in conditions of freedom. But the evidence of history tends to show that integrity, love of truth and fiery individualism flow at least as often in severely disciplined communities as in more tolerant or indifferent societies, and if this is so accepted, Roy's argument for freedom as a necessary condition for the growth of human genius falls to the ground. Roy faces a cruel dilemma even in his own humane version of it.

The second characteristic of this notion of freedom is of greater importance. By implications, it is not incompatible with some kind of autocracy. Just as a democracy may, in fact, deprive the individual citizen of a great many liberties which he might have in some other form of society, so it is perfectly conceivable that a liberal-minded despot would allow his subjects a large measure of personal freedom. The despot who leaves his subjects a wide area of liberty may be unjust, or encourage the widest inequalities, care little for order, or virtue, or knowledge; but provided he does not curb their liberty, he meets with Roy's specification. It may further be said that individual freedom, even in the most liberal societies, is not the criterion of social action. The extent of a man's liberty to choose to live as they desire, must be weighed against the claims of many other values of which equality, or justice, or happiness, or security, or public order are perhaps the most obvious ex-

24. Roy, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 15.

amples. For this reason, it can be unlimited. There is little need to stress the fact that monism, and a faith in a single criterion, has always proved a deep source of satisfaction both to the intellect and the emotions. To assume that all values can be graded on one scale, so that it is a mere matter of inspection to determine the highest, is to falsify one's knowledge of man as free agents. In the end, man chooses between ultimate values; he chooses as he does, because his life and thought are determined by fundamental moral concepts that are as much a part of his being and conscious thought and sense of his own identity, as his basic physical nature.

In Roy, the emphasis is new, otherwise, he accepts that, once personal freedom has become historically possible, society exists for the sake of furthering and protecting its growth. However scientific and empirical in intention and in its treatment, Roy's co-operative individualism rest ultimately upon a view of human nature which is philosophical. Man is social by nature. Reason and freedom are its manifestations. The notion of such a consummation is metaphysical, and indeed ultimately religious. It represents the utopian element in Roy's thought, transmitted to him both via Hegel's philosophy of reason, and Feuerbach's conception of human nature.

SOCIETY AND THE STATE.

Roy's conception of human nature becomes the basis of society and the state. He attributes their origin to the act of man for promoting his freedom.²⁵ Mankind existed at a low level of development before society and the state came into being. Hobbesian description of the pre-social mankind is found closer to reality. There was a state of nature, but not the idealised state of Rousseau's imagination. The exigencies of the struggle against the forces of nature obliged the primitive man to seek company of his fellow beings. Co-operative social relationships were established originally with the purpose of reinforcing the struggle for existence.

Roy categorically rejects the idea that social relations are determined either by inscrutable divine will, or by an abstract

25. *New Humanism*, p. 12.

conception of morality. The origin and evolution of society has material causes.²⁶ The congregation takes place first for hunting, then for herding domesticated animals. The foundation of human society is firmly laid only when he learns to make the earth bear fruit through cultivation. That epoch-making knowledge closes the period of migration in search of food. Groups of human beings settled down in particular localities, and the organisation of society definitely begins.

Roy like Rousseau, presents communal pattern of social growth. Each group marks out an area as its collective domain. The ownership is common because land is cultivated by the labour of the entire community. The fruits of collective labour belong to all collectively. There is no distinction between mine and thine. But this state of affairs does not last long. With the origin of private property, the community comes to have common interest. The existence of society is threatened by its members. There arises the necessity of some authority to govern the new relations. This gives birth to the state.

Roy defines the state as "the political organisation of society."²⁷ Apart from regulating the new relations, arising from the system of private property, laws were required to co-ordinate the diversified functions of the primitive communities, which grew larger and larger. The state arose as the instrument for the purpose. No longer a Marxist, Roy refutes that the state was super-imposed on society. The rise of state is neither the result of social contract nor the manifestation of desire to dominate society. "It was a spontaneous process promoted, almost mechanically, by the common regulation of the necessity of co-operation for the security of all concerned for the administration of public affairs."²⁸ Its evolution is not only historical but also a natural phenomena. Roy is however, aware of its coercive character, which he ascribes to the growing complexity of the social and political organisation, and to the uneven intellectual and cultural development of the community. This led to the practice of the delegation of authority to a few,

26. M. N. Roy, "From Savagery to Civilisation," *Independent India*, Vol. IV, No. 22, 1940, p. 278.

27. "Politics Without Party," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 38, 1949, p. 469.

28. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 23.

qualified to administer. Thus, power becomes centralised, and the state, which was originally an organisation of the people to promote their freedom, resulted into the subordination of many to few. Freedom is challenged by organisation.

Roy attempts to resolve the dilemma on the assumption that there is no contradiction between freedom and a harmonious social order. Such a contradiction results from the view that a social order is something over and above the individual, and has a purpose of its own. But the solution becomes more difficult as society becomes more complicated. To reconcile freedom with social organisation, Roy tries to reshape the state on the basis of the principles of pluralism, decentralisation and democracy.

To this end, Roy approaches the state as one of the social institutions, all equally autonomous. His idea was that in the society, there should remain a plurality of institutions, each institution dealing with a particular aspect of social life. Roy's society consists of autonomous associations, the state being one of them, with no other function than to regulate and coordinate their diverse activities. The state must exist and discharge its limited functions along with other equally important social institutions.

Roy follows it up with a plea for decentralisation. Power should not remain concentrated in the hands of few; maximum possible autonomy should be granted to the local units. In a simple, decentralised unit, people will be able to assert themselves, and, thus, experience real freedom. Advocating diffusion of power, Roy warns that "when power is concentrated in the hands of any minority or any section, it necessarily becomes an instrument of coercion and democracy becomes impossible."²⁹ For that, he reduces the functions of the state to the most minimum. The first purpose of any state is to guarantee every member the pre-requisite of physical existence. Thereafter, everybody endowed with the ability to acquire knowledge, this capacity has to be cultivated. The process of this cultivation leads to organised cultural and educational activities. Speaking about the general functions of the state, Roy maintains that it should be no more than to maintain conditions under which it will not be

necessary for any man to kill another, or for communities or nations to attack each other for what one may possess and the other may lack. Once conditions of peaceful existence and continuance of physical well-being are created, people should be left to themselves.

Roy's decentralised state relies upon the rational judgement of individual. Decentralisation of authority does not lead to the denial of the necessity of the state. Roy does not accept either the anarchist view that politics is an evil, nor the Marxist utopia of a stateless society. The membership of civil society implies the responsibility of doing whatever is necessary to guarantee an orderly, equitable and just administration of public affairs. Only the recluse can disown the responsibility. "The ideal of the stateless society is an obvious absurdity."³⁰ Neither an all powerful state a stateless society is Roy's ideal. He visualises a time when the state, through the practice of decentralisation, will cease to be Leviathan which it has become today.

Pluralism and decentralisation bring about structural changes but human freedom will be secured only when society functions in true democratic spirit. Democracy, Roy holds, "will be possible and practical in proportion as the state will become coterminous with society."³¹ Of course, he admits that state and society are not identical. But he insists that if the state is to be regarded as the political organisation of society, as it should be, then, there is no reason why the state should not be coterminous with society. Roy's aim is to enable the citizen to control the state, and this is to be achieved by treating relations of the state with the individual as a continuation of the relation between man and society. This necessitates the direct and active participation of the people in the affairs of the state.

The search for a way out results in what Roy calls the principles of radical democracy, which would eliminate the inadequacies of formal parliamentary democracy, and obviate the dangers of dictatorship of any class or elite. The basic feature of radical democracy is that the people must have ways and means to exercise sovereign power effectively. Roy makes par-

30. M. N. Roy, "Politics Without Power," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 22, 1950, p. 258.

31. *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 19.

liament the apex of a pyramidal structure of the state, reared on the base of organised democracy, composed of a countryside network of people's committees. A major problem to be solved will be how to reconcile economic planning with individual freedom with the largest measure of direct democracy. The problem arises because large states are not likely to disappear, and some degree of economic planning is indispensable in the modern world. If one accepts Roy's contention that "collectivism and individualism" are "mutually exclusive principles,"³² then the idea of democratic state seems to be self-contradictory and unrealistic.

Roy's analysis of society and state is the application of historical method to the facts of nature. Such an adoption has its own justification, but it has its own limitations. History cannot answer the riddles of the sphinx. It can trace a process, it cannot determine the value of results. It remains a record of what was, and of how it came to be. It cannot attain to a view of what ought to be, or to an explanation of why it should be, though it can help such attainment by giving a survey of human ideals, and a sketch of the institutions in which men have sought to realise those ideals. If this be so, it follows that it is no answer to a philosophic explanation of the reason d' être and value of the state. The final support of the historical method, if one turns to Roy's radical democracy, seems to be somewhat malancholy conservatism. History does not furnish with guiding thread of growing freedom. What history proves is the rarity and fragility of democracy.

Social order and individual freedom like religion and science, are in a state of conflict or uneasy compromise throughout the whole world. In Greece, social cohesion was secured by loyalty to the city-state. During the six and half centuries from Alexander to Constantine, it was secured neither by philosophy nor by ancient loyalties, but by force, first that of armies and then that of civil administration. Social cohesion is a necessity, and mankind has never yet succeeded in enforcing cohesion by merely rational arguments. Every community is exposed to two opposite dangers : ossification through too much discipline, and

32. *From Savagery To Civilisation*, Calcutta: Digest Book House, 1940, p. 12.

dissolution through the growth of personal independence that makes co-operation impossible. Roy's radical democratic stands exposed to these dangers.

Roy defeats the basic purpose of his political philosophy—freedom—by an apparent confusion of state with society. The difference between society and state is not merely a distinction in name, the importance of this difference subsists in its concrete application. Failure to recognise the difference blurs the distinction between democracy and totalitarianism. Roy is inconsistent in the use of the term 'state'. In some cases, it is used to signify society proper; in other cases, it is used in a narrower meaning as merely the barometer of conflicts between equal groups. But his conception of state possessing relative sovereignty, functioning among equal and co-ordinating groups is surely not identified with the complex of relationship which the 'community' or 'society' denotes.

The distinction between state and society deserves fuller treatment. Society consists of the complicated network of groups and institutions, expressing human association. Most of these groups have an existence distinct from the state. It is also the harmoniser and regulator of these groups, and the court of appeal in case of disputes between them and individuals. To guarantee impartially and efficiency, the state of the future will, perhaps more formally adopt open representation of groups instead of obscure method of the present state. The decision of the state and the degree of its interference with the function of the groups or of individuals depend upon any abstract ipse dixit, but upon general acceptability. Roy sacrifices these discordant actualities for the roundness of a system.

What is desirable is healthy relation between the two. Society is held together by the state; if it were not so, it could not exist. It is easy to say with Roy that voluntary co-operation achieves the vast mass of work, and that the state achieves but little. It is harder but quite necessary to see that voluntary co-operation is only made possible by the state. More there is of voluntary co-operation, the more need there is of the state. But that is the simple fact. The state as the great source of adjustment, is all the more needed the more there is to adjust. Roy forgets that the great extension in modern times of voluntary co-operation also meant a great extension of government.

Worse still, Roy confuses government with the state, which he describes as "the instrument of public administration."³³ Whether a particular government is centralised or decentralised is merely a difference in the means of achieving the aims of the state, but government is wholly distinct. India, U.S.A., France and U.K., are all states with their governments diversely organised. These distinctions are not merely a matter of terminology, but are essential to clear thinking on politics. If Roy had gathered this truth, his analysis would not have been marred by ambiguities.

Advocating decentralisation as the necessary condition for realising human freedom, Roy has apparently in mind the freedom of the original artist. Modern technology has made freedom a more intricate problem for the vast majority of people. Concentration of power becomes inevitable to enable the state to deliver the goods. When Roy accuses the collectivists of not being conscious of the dangers of concentration, he surely has in mind collectivism of older variety. Collectivists like Cole stress individuality, publicity and participation of workers in order to avoid the evils of power. They recognise as emphatically as Roy, the necessity of protecting and encouraging variation and growth. The issue between Roy and Cole, for example, is not whether liberty is desirable, but by what means it may best be maintained. Roy's solution is only a summery of Nineteenth Century democracy. He fails to present the picture of a well-balanced state.

ETHICS AND POLITICS.

Roy moves from the concept of 'economic man' to the concept of 'moral man' in pursuance of his new ideal. He strongly feels that politics cannot be divorced from ethics without jeopardising the goal of freedom. The moral values, which Roy wants to apply on politics, are neither the super-structures of economic system nor the 'product of religion. Roy propounds a non-transcendental theory of morality. Morality is traced to rationality in man. It "emmanates from the rational desire for

harmonious and mutually beneficial social relations.”³⁴ Reason is the only sanction for morality, which is an appeal to conscience. The innate rationality of man is the only guarantee of harmonious order, which will also be a moral order, because morality is a rational function.

Roy's conception is hedonistic and Epicurean. Moral values are those principles which a man should observe for his own welfare, and for the proper working of society. They represent the enlightened self-interest of the individual. When Roy talks of the necessity of morality in public life, the problem involved is whether man can be moral by himself. Roy's answer is in the affirmative. Man can be moral by himself without the sanction of any higher power or authority. This spontaneous nature of ethics distinguishes man from lower animals.

Rational moral behaviour of individual lays the foundation of social morality. “Without moral men, there can be no moral society.”³⁵ This only happens when man becomes conscious of his own rationality and social responsibility. Roy rejects the view that society must be reformed to reform the individual. Of course, he admits that when people live in an oppressive social order, it becomes difficult to do so. But the necessity to do it becomes all the greater. And if one looks at the problem, barring the crassly dictatorial regimes, in a modern civilised social order, there is ample scope for the individual to develop as a free moral being. But the wish is often lacking, and most of the people fall in line with degenerated ways of life to gain success. This could be related to the present problem of corruption in India. That is one way of adjusting individual relations with society, but that does not improve matters.

Roy does not rely upon laws to create good society because good laws can be effective only when they codify already accepted or acceptable modes of behaviour. Roy is likely to be misunderstood for his effort to reduce the role of law in society. But he does not recommend withdrawal from politics. He advocates humanist politics as the only answer to dualism in public affairs. This may lead to the purification and rationali-

34. Roy, *New Humanism*, p. 35.

35. M. N. Roy, “Science and Society,” *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 22, 1949, p. 262.

sation of politics. The object of humanist politics will be served by simply making it impossible for anybody to "deceive the people and sway them like dumb-driven cattle."³⁶ In proportion as this much is achieved, the foundation for freedom and democracy will be laid. This can change the complexion of Indian politics.

The monistic approach to ethics and politics in the humanist politics of Roy, leads to the unity of means and ends. The method of carrying immediate struggle will determine the nature of ultimate object. By placing short-term programme and long-term objective in that direction, Roy makes two things inseparable. Here, a reference to the relation between Gandhism and the philosophy of Radical Humanism will not be out of place. When M. N. Roy came back to India, Gandhism was a powerful force in the country, and his reaction to it was naturally very sharp. While he had faith in Marxism, he criticised Gandhism boldly and directly. On realising the inadequacies of Marxism, Roy came to appreciate the moral aspect of Gandhian philosophy. However, the difference in Roy's outlook and that of Gandhi must not be overlooked. Roy was a full-blooded rationalist, advocating secular ethics, rational politics and economy of plenty. He does not share Gandhi's mysticism and religious ideas. Gandhi was rather a humanitarian than a humanist. The desire to do good to all men without discrimination is laudable. But it does necessarily mean to place the highest value in man. Gandhi did not regard man as the end in himself, but as the means for the operation of the purpose of God.³⁷ The sublime attitude of surrender to a higher power enabled Gandhi to disown the responsibility of his own action. Roy rejects this sort of transcendentalism because "once God is let in, there is an end to the sovereignty of man."³⁸ This is one-sided picture of Gandhi. One of the most important of Gandhi's acts is that he compels Indian ethics to come to grips with reality. Roy sets up the ideal of the over-man in contrast with the ordinary, everyday man of the common-herd. Only the

36. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 128.

37. *Harijan*, May 14, 1938, p. 109.

38. "Humanism, Rationalism and Science," *Independent India*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1949, p. 932.

powerful will of the overman persists as the absolute value. As against it, Gandhi would invoke God's blessings to strengthen the common man in following the moral path.

Roy's attempt to find in the cosmic process an ethical standard, is based upon the ambiguity of the law-governed physical universe. In a sense, it may be admitted that the moral process is a part of the cosmic process, but the important point is that the moral process cannot take its standard from the non-moral part of the cosmic process, and the theory of politics, which has arrived from this, is nothing short of administrative nihilism.

Roy ignores the fact that politics is concerned with herds rather with individual. Modern technique has produced a conflict between self-interest and instinct. If people were actuated by rational self-interest, which they are not—except in the case of few saints—the world would become heaven. Roy sees to it that man does not become wholly selfish, and until it happens the millenium will be impossible. It is not striking a note of mysticism. It is not to deny that there are better things than selfishness, and that some people achieve these things. However, it must be maintained that there are few occasions when a large number of people can rise above selfishness. On the other hand, there are a very great many circumstances in which majority of men will be below selfishness, if it means enlightened self-interest. And among such occasions are most of those occasions when they are convinced that they are acting from idealistic motives. Much that passes as idealism is disguised hatred or hidden love for power. When large masses are seen swayed by what appear to be noble motives, it is as well to look the surface and ask what it is that makes these motives effective. It is partly because it is so easy to be taken in by a facade of nobility that a psychological enquiry is worth making. Desire, activity and purpose are essential to a tolerable life, and Roy's millenium, though it may be in prospect, would be intolerable if it were actually "achieved. The fundamental problem of ethics and politics is that of finding some way of reconciling the needs of social life with the urgency of social desires. But Roy's demand for morality in politics is quite uncompromising as he holds that so long as power remains the basic incentive of political practice, it cannot conform strictly

with professed moral principles. This leads Roy to propound a theory of politics without power.

POLITICS WITHOUT POWER.

What makes Roy an uncompromising critic of power-politics is that it merges man into the masses. "Politicians and social engineers have created a monster which responds riotously only to appeals to passion, hatred, greed, lust for power."³⁹ Man is debased to the level of unthinking beast to serve the purpose of power-politics. In pursuance of his new conviction, Roy dissolved the Radical Democratic Party in 1948. It, of course, did not mean that he no longer had anything to do with politics. The very term power-politics suggests that there might be other kinds of politics, and that "politics need not necessarily be associated with power."⁴⁰ Politics can be practised without power. Roy rejects the view that one must have power to reconstruct society. The only question is whether a different practice of politics is possible. Can politics be raised above the scramble for power?

The answer lies in ending party-politics, which Roy considers as the basis of power-politics. He laments the rise of party system with which politics became scramble for power, and the idea of popular sovereignty turned into constitutional fiction. It has led to the result of defeating the object of modern politics, which is to establish a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The party-system contradicts the first two terms. Any party government, at best, is a government for the people. If government for the people were a democratic government, benevolent despotism would be treated as the highest form of democracy. The position becomes worse when the control of state perpetually vests in "one party claiming to be the sole custodian of popular interest."⁴¹ It breeds paternalism, which kills self-reliance in the people and fosters in them an authoritarian mentality, a pre-disposition to accept authority as the natural order of things. In countries like India,

39. Roy, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 274.

40. Roy, *Radical Humanism*, p. 36.

41. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 96.

evils of one-party rule is fortified by the traditional credulity and general ignorance of the people.

Abolition of party system, Roy holds, will enable politics to operate without the incentive of power. "In the absence of that corrupting agency, morality in political practice becomes possible."⁴² It is not power which is corrupting, but its concentration, which is an evil. Politics as the instrument of concentration must be abolished.

Roy follows it with the abolition of representative government, which he considers inadequate to realise the ideal of democracy. It eliminates popular sovereignty, and rests upon delegation of power. This reversal of relations between man and man-made institutions is denial of the fundamental concept of democracy. Roy, therefore, suggests the replacement of party-politics and parliamentary system by humanist politics as a long step towards real democracy as it implies active participation in politics without engaging in the scramble for power. Roy conceives the idea of organised democracy to practise humanist politics. The idea gets its concrete form in people's committees, which will be basic units' and also act as "standing bodies with wide powers and direct influence on similar committees for larger areas, and through them the citizens will actually be in possession of power always."⁴³ The result will be far-reaching decentralisation of the state, which will become a clearing house of information to co-ordinate and supervise policies, framed directly by the people as a whole.

Roy's organised democracy ruling out the idea of representative government, emerges into direct democracy, in which, detached individuals, modern version of philosopher-kings, will be at the helm of affairs. Such persons being spiritually free cannot be corrupted by power. "A man susceptible to corruption is not spiritually free, not a detached, not a philosopher."⁴⁴ Roy relies upon the education of citizens in building up a new political structure from below. Education of the citizens is the condition for such a reorganisation of society as will be condu-

42. M. N. Roy, "Gandhism and Humanism", *Independent India*, Vol. XIII, No. 12, 1949, p. 140.

43. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 57.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

cive to common progress and prosperity without any encroachment upon individual freedom. It is in this sense that democracy becomes organised, enabling people to move from politics of power to politics of freedom.

Roy wants to reconstruct the economic life of society also on the basis of organised democracy. Material prosperity is an essential condition of human freedom, unfolding intellectual and other finer potentialities. Economic re-organisation aims to eliminate the possibility of exploitation of man by man. But Roy is never in doubt that economic security is the means, and freedom is the end. If the pursuit of economic security leads to the denial of freedom, it loses all its value. He wants to end poverty and exploitation without forging new chains for man. "Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter in the absence of the former."⁴⁵ Freedom is possible if economic reorganisation of society takes place on the basis of co-operation and decentralisation. The economy of the new social order will be based on production for use and distribution with reference to human needs. Roy does not rule out the idea of planned economy in the new society but it will be planning for individual freedom as its main objective. He is most anxious about the cultural growth of society to offset the dangers of economic regimentation. This he ensures through universal dissemination of knowledge and incentive to creative activity. This will make new society democratic—politically, economically as well as culturally.

Roy's theory of politics without power sounds like Fabian gradualism. The change over from power-politics to humanist politics will be brought about by raising the intellectual level of the people. Political parties can play significant role in accelerating that process, but Roy discards this instrument. Of course, it will be presumptuous to declare representative democracy as the only solution to the problem of modern time. Yet the alternative of Radical Humanism, however attractive it may be, recedes as one tries to reach near it. Aware of its shortcomings, Roy admits that in the transition period, parliamentary democracy, with all its failure, will be preferable to a dictatorship. Still, Roy seems oblivious of the perpetual nature of 'the

45. Roy, *New Humanism*, pp. 56-57.

transition period, which may remain in permanent state of transition. His distrust of parties is misconceived, and he appears to be prejudiced in his statement that "so long as parties stand between the state and the people, the latter can never be the sovereign power."⁴⁶ He does not take into account the possibility of internal democratisation of parties which will certainly be an improvement, and will alter the situation eventually. Only through political apparatus can democracy of the participative variety be effective. Roy permits the range of party participation to the level of 'people's committees,' and he may find that "in the process . . . the parties themselves would be re-oriented in their platform as well as in their systematic plans for carrying out responsible, flexible, responsive, democratic government."⁴⁷ It is doubtful whether politics flows upwards unless the channels, e.g., constitution, agreement on a legal order, political parties, free press, etc., are framed as pre-conditions.

Roy's philosophy of politics without power, no doubt, displays his anxiety to achieve real democracy, but it confuses the issues by confounding means with ends. The political and governmental phase of democracy is a means, the best means so far found, for realising ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality. The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed as the necessity for the participation of every mature being in the formation of values that regulate the living of man together, which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals. Political parties, universal suffrage, recurring elections, and other factors of democratic government are means that have been found expedient for realising democracy as the truly human way

46. M. N. Roy's *letter* to Richard L. Park, dated April 7, 1951, Document No. 4, Subject: Individual Correspondence Foreign, Richard L. Park, File No. 1 C-FOR/RLP-1, M. N. Roy Archive, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

47. Richard L. Park's *letter* to M. N. Roy, dated April 2, 1951, Document No. 3, Subject: International Correspondence Foreign, Richard L. Park, File No. IC-FOR/RLP-1, M. N. Roy Archive, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

of living. They are not a final end and a final value. They are to be judged on the basis of their contribution to the end.

Roy's denunciation of power is a futile exercise in politics. It is, indeed, by far the strongest motive in the lives of the people. Love of power is greatly increased by the experience, and this applies to petty power as well as to that of potentates. But it has other sides which are more desirable. The pursuit of knowledge is mainly actuated by it. And so are all advances in scientific technique. In politics also, a reformer may have just as strong a love of power as a despot. It would be a complete mistake to decry love of power altogether as a motive, for "this motive is sure to arise in course of an active career."⁴⁸ When man is led by this motive to actions which are useful, or to actions which are pernicious, depends upon a social system, and upon his capacities.

The other motive, fundamental to power is love of excitement. To escape from boredom is one of the really powerful desires of almost all human beings. Civilised life has grown altogether too tame, and, if it is to be stable, it must provide harmless outlets for the impulses which primitive men satisfied in hunting. Interwoven with power-motive are two closely related passions to which human beings are regrettably prone : fear and hate. It is normal to hate what one fears. Fear is in itself degrading, and it leads headlong to excesses of cruelty. Nothing has so beneficent an effect on human beings as security, which, in turn, demands power. Roy himself suffers from power-complex. His solution is a step towards the taming of power, and not for its abolition.

It may be pointed out that Roy's organised democracy leads to paternal type of government. Can a theory that holds that the individual self and the social self tend to coalesce, stop short of making the state dominant? The sophistries of Roy's political management are presumably dangerous because they are likely to end in that dominance. There is reason to disbelieve that in Roy's direct democracy, the devices of propagandists and the art of advertiser will not be used to make palatable to the citizen policies about which he may in fact have serious doubts.

48. Bertrand Russel, *Power: A. New Social Analysis*, London: Unwin Books, 1965, p. 179.

Roy is aware that rulers are frequently selfish and proud, and that irresponsible conduct is always possible. But he minimises this possibility by the gospel of good men, which is not valid. Political problems will be solved in future less and less by discussion, and more and more by analytical therapy. The problem of politics is less to solve conflicts than to prevent them. Roy fails to resolve the dilemma of preventive politics.

Roy tries to cover these shortcomings under the garb of scientific knowledge. Like all types of political and social theory, he conjures the term scientific Humanism. But on the whole, the name and authority of science were more frequently coveted and appropriated than its efficient spirit. Of scientific social studies, it might truthfully be declared that not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into kingdom. The 'scientific' is far beyond the 'justiciable', and nobody including Roy has yet reached the latter.

CHAPTER VII

LIBERAL METAMORPHOSIS OF ROY

Pilgrimage from communism to humanism represents liberal metamorphosis of Roy. The problem confronting him was that which faces all honest souls brought up in orthodoxy. It is the essence of orthodoxy that it is dated, and sooner or later it ceases to be a satisfactory explanation of a world which it has ceased to explain. Reality contradicts faith. Roy had "the pride of intellect", and "was not of the sort that follows another blindly and without questioning."¹ His sole concern was to realise freedom himself and help others to do so. As his conception of freedom developed a richer and more complex meaning, his political philosophy underwent a corresponding transformation. The greatness of his life consisted in the twin fact that while he had the courage to debunk his ideological limitations and cut across his own self-created mental barriers without hesitation and without caring for the immediate shock that his public life would receive, he had, on the other hand, attained the pinnacle of glory in each ideological sphere in which he devoted a part of his life.

TRAGEDY OF ROY.

Liberal metamorphosis of Roy is not without an element of tragedy. M. N. Roy and Jawahar Lal Nehru were perhaps the two Indians who had deeply absorbed the true values of civilisation, built up in Western Europe. But unlike Nehru, Roy failed as a politician though by temperament he liked action. Of course, he had the compensation of being gifted with political clairvoyance. Many of his predictions were fulfilled in his life time. It is strange that in a country so given to hero-worship, Roy should not have become a popular idol. Not that his merits as a political thinker are entirely unrecognised. Roy got

1. Jawahar Lal Nehru, 'Manabendra Nath Roy,' in *M. N. Roy, Pamphlet No. 4*, Poona: Young Socialist League, 1935, p. 1.

frustrated, and had more than enough reason to be bitter. He himself explains the tragedy: "The difference is in power. With power, the most mediocre man can be the greatest leader of the world, and without power, the greatest intellect may pass unnoticed."² Such men in all times and places are suspect to all aggressive patriots, and are doomed during revolutionary upheavals to be displaced from positions of trust and even systematically hounded out of public life.

An unusual combination of unique talents made Roy an incomparably fascinating and disturbing personality—irresistably attractive to those who knew him and equally forbidding to those who looked from a distance. From the personal point of view, Roy's task was even more difficult, and this for two reasons. He was born in a country which was languishing in the backwaters of history, hardly visited by the fresh currents of modern thought. Secondly, the tempo of change in modern times is far quicker, and in consequence, the crisis of the contemporary world is far deeper and more formidable than any in the past. Roy had, therefore, to pass in one short life, through three historical epochs of nationalism, Marxism and humanism. His intense love for freedom was coupled with an equally intense passion for truth. He disliked intellectual fog in any direction. Hence, he became a consistent iconoclast, a life-long crusader against cherished belief. This search for truth, he conducted with a giant intellect which was both acutely analytical and massively creative—a combination which few indeed are fortunate to possess. He had the courage to think out his ideas without the least influence of crowd psychology. Roy was in that sense an intellectual purist which gave Marx in his life time the undeserved reputation of a quarrelsome and hairsplitting politician.

The defeat of revolution in China was a blow to Roy's career in the Comintern. On his forced return to India in 1930, he failed to gain control of the Indian communist movement, although he was the most gifted of the communist stalwarts, and had had virtually blazed the trail of socialist thought in India. The jail life of six years made him despondent, and

he started experiencing "cosmic boredom,"³ and he started developing desire to have his "services recognised."⁴ It made him cynical though a good-natured cynicism is the faith of all consistent liberals. Roy could hardly shake off this curious mood of subjectivism, and found it difficult to forget that once he was the most colourful of all non-Russian communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin. But this did not turn him into a pessimist although his sense of realism bordered on the Stoical during the last years of his life. He did not lack personal warmth and affection, which is key to the solution of a great many of the ills which press most of the people out of their human perspectives.

Roy knew the art of success but he did not practise it. Explaining his failure in India politics, Roy remarks, "To work in India, one must be an Indian, having regard for the Indian mentality."⁵ The fact is that he was out of sorts in India, and rather felt "homesick for Europe."⁶ Therefore, the severence between him and the Indian National Congress was no longer a puzzle. Holding the views that he did about Gandhi, why did he join Congress? The explanation lies in his technique of operation—an ethics that does not appeal, though it is an easy way of capturing power. Roy failed to pull on, and left Congress on war issue, which drove him to join hands with the government. This made him unpopular with the masses. The Government of India took keen interest in his plan of "setting up a new Central Organisation"⁷ in the field of labour, and even went to the extent of financing it with huge amount.⁸ The then Finance Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council tried to help and save Roy's publications by suggesting to the

3. M. N. Roy, *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary: Letters From Jail*, Vol. III, p. 156.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

7. Roy's letter to Homi Manek, dated November 14, 1941, Document No. 9, File No. IFL-I, M. N. Roy Archive, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

8. Letter from R. K. Tandon, Under-Secretary to the Government of India to the Secretary, Indian Federation of Labour, dated December 4, 1944, Document No. 19, File No. IFL-26, M. N. Roy Archive, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

financial magnate Delmia to take them over.⁹ The Royists in the Indian Legislature voted with the government on Finance Bill¹⁰ which Congress fought upto the very last moment. Roy's association with the government, instead of strengthening his position, demaged and tarnished his image in public mind, and his followers became the victims of mob fury and resentment. This alienation, accompanied by disillusionment with communism, puts Roy in a category apart from most other ex-communists. Out of the depth of political isolation, he emerged with a clearer vision of principles of social re-construction. A dialectician of remarkable subtlety, he carried the mind out of the heat and hurry of controversy into a larger atmosphere, into spacious hinterlands of cold reason, unclouded by passion. The philosopher was never lost in the propagandist. In a less integrated man than Roy, such tumultuous variety of experience would have resulted in confusion or in stricken silence. But in him, they were digested into the material of a growing personality and philosophy of life. As a poet, Roy turned personal agony into a deep concern for mankind. The tragedy paved way for a universal philosophy.

A LIBERAL ORIENTATION.

Roy emerges with a liberal orientation of Indian politics. The rise of aggressive nationalism and militant communism threatened a set-back to liberal values in India no less than in other parts of the world. Nationalism in India was all the more dangerous because it tried to promote a religious revivalist outlook. Under Gandhi's leadership, it shed some of its militant features, but retained its anti-national and anti-liberal orientation. Communism with its method of organised violence and its ruthless suppression of individual freedom, its dialectical perversion of all empirical enquiry, and its advocacy of dictatorship was a clear repudiation of everything that liberalism stood

9. Letter from Archibald Rowlands to M. N. Roy, dated May 24, 1946, Document No. 22, File No. IC-FOR-7, M. N. Roy Archive, Indian Renaissance Institute, Dehradun.

10. Letter from Sir Archibald Rowlands to M. N. Roy, dated April 9, 1946, Document No. 19, File No. IC-FOR-7, M. N. Roy Archive, IRI, Dehradun.

for. Freed from the Marxian determinism, and recalling the liberal background of pre-Marxist period, Roy proposes a re-organisation of Indian society which can retain the values of liberal tradition, and yet lead to higher material standards and less inequality. There is no need for democracy to be a Leviathan. The social, economic and political life of the country can be decentralised, and many of its functions performed in local republics.

Roy as a liberal comes to the conclusion that the real conflict is between dictatorial communism and resurgent idea of democracy. To turn the tide, democracy must re-orientate itself and "it must revert to the humanist tradition of liberalism."¹¹ The rise of democracy in India must be preceded by the enlightenment of Eighteenth Century France. In Roy's opinion, "Western liberalism can help the development of such a movement."¹² Rationalism of Indian Politics is the pre-condition for fruitful political practice. The main features of Roy's liberal orientation embrace evolutionary naturalism, refined hedonism, rationalism, cosmopolitanism and grass-roots democracy. It disabuses the public mind of the fictions of class, caste and creed, and reminds of only of one social reality, the human individual. Radical Humanism completely breaks away from socialism for the inevitable conflict between the two. This conflict appears because liberalism takes its stand on the individual interest as its final end, while socialism upholds common interest. They cannot be synthesised. Since interest is the property of mind, one, who, asserts that there is a common interest which is not the interest of the individual, must also assert that there is a common mind which is not the mind of any human individual. Roy rejects such a concept of common mind¹³ and hence a priori common interest. His reaction is on philosophical grounds. He interprets the term—common interest—as a complex of interests, and, a complex of interests is not a interest. This complex is a function, and needs to be defined continuously by social process. The difference between socialism and Roy's liberal humanism is ultimately one between a

11. Roy, *New Orientation*, p. 212.

12. "Democracy and Nationalism in Asia," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVI, No. 29, 1952, p. 340.

13. *New Orientation*, p. 252.

priori concept of common interest and a postriori concept of it. One can formulate this difference as between coercion and co-operation. The former negates individualism while the latter affirms the reality of individual, and still urges individuals to co-operate for constructing an emergent social reality. Roy was really carrying on the great liberal tradition of the nineteenth century.

Roy's liberal orientation makes one keenly conscious of the opposition between the state as the creature of liberty, and the state as creator of liberty and of the personality of its citizens. By lashing at democratic worship of the state, Roy takes legitimate pride in the structure of the humanist polity on its foundation of freedom. A permanent influence of liberalism upon democracy is possible only if its action begins from below, from the humble experiences of association and organisation, rising by degrees to the wider manifestations of social life. Roy's plea for reconstructing Indian polity being a pyramidal structure reared on the base of organised democracy, composed of a country-wide network of people's committees, is an attempt in this direction. Though it appears difficult to look upon co-operative as a panacea, Roy's liberal picture of Indian polity is a fine example of utopian social engineering. He visualises a co-operative form economic organisation, which claims to retain all the benefits of technology while avoiding its evils. Supreme importance is attached to individual initiative and individual judgment. No longer its champion, Roy is not hostile if it is planning for freedom. Planning must not be made by a few persons forming a Central Planning Commission so that it does not encroach upon individual freedom. The people organised locally, should be given full opportunity to formulate and also to execute the plan. This leads Roy to rule out the method of building up heavy industries as a means to raise the standard of living of people in India.¹⁴ Equally, Roy is opposed to nationalisation, which he finds incompatible with an autonomous co-operative economic organisation' of society, whose object is to "prevent political power becoming totalitarian and the state the dreaded Leviathan."¹⁵ He removes the apathy and resent-

14. *Politics, Power and Parties*, p. 157.

15. M. N. Roy, "Plea For Realist Economy," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIV, No. 13, 1950, p. 152.

ment resulting from the propaganda of socialist myth, fostered over more than thirty years by the tradition of romantic expectations in India.

SPECTRE OF AUTHORITARIANISM.

Liberal metamorphosis of Roy has great relevance to Indian politics as it exposes the spectre of authoritarianism, raising its ugly head in the country. Roy apprehended the growth of totalitarianism in the Indian Constitution, in which, he found the worst features of "American Federalism and French Centralism."¹⁶ Particularly, the procedure of electing the President and his unlimited powers are the danger spots. Roy feared that President of Indian Republic would function more as the spokesman of the ruling party than the custodian of public interests. The role of President in installing Central rule in various states as the result of the failure of constitutional machinery, partly justifies Roy's doubts. The opposition parties very often complain that they have not received fair deal in the formation and dislodging of ministries in such states, and the President's actions have only promoted the cause of ruling party in the Centre. Ever since the split in the Indian National Congress over the issue of party nominee for the office of President, it has been observed that the President has come to rely heavily upon the party in power, and in turn that has cost him freedom of action. His emergency powers give wide range of authority to the government to function in an arbitrary manner. In case of parties equally balanced in parliament, the President may emerge as real head, and ultimately succeed in installing a government, which may play to his tune.

Roy condemns the retention of unity, imposed by 'Pax Britannica' as ideal of Indian nationalism. Any approach, ignoring communal, cultural and linguistic differences would be unrealistic. Roy, therefore, did not mind regionalism—a sort of sub-nationalism, which is as essential as nationalism in itself. His concern was to ensure Indian Polity against the growth of monolithic structure, overtaking it.

16. "The Structure of Indian State," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XIII, No. 27, 1944, p. 322.

Roy was fully aware of the authoritarian implications of any change which the government would bring about in the name of socialism. This would deprive individual of his freedom, leaving him with the fiction of rights. Writing off democratic socialism as contradiction in terms, Roy warned that "if democratic-socialists come to power anywhere, either their socialism or their democracy will go by the board."¹⁷ So, democratic socialism and communism are in the last analysis the same. Ultimately, the choice will be between socialism and democracy. Roy rejects Bernstein's contention that "socialism is the legitimate heir of liberalism."¹⁸ Democratic socialism is denial and negation of all liberal values. While Bernstein holds to the twin values of socialism and democracy, Roy retains democracy but abandons socialism. Roy's abandonment of socialism reveals Marxian synthesis as the historical counterpart to the liberal integration, and indeed there is a sense in which liberalism and socialism can be described as alternative reaction to the challenge posed by the industrial revolution.

The incorporation of 24th, 25th and 29th amendments in the Indian Constitution justifies Roy's fears. The essential features of totalitarian state are sought to be established in this country through Article 31(c), by which the right to dissent would disappear, newspapers could be nationalised and democracy stifled for ever. Article 31(c) violates essential features of the Constitution, abrogate even those rights which are not connected with property. It may be suggested that Article 31(c) was brought in to remove conflict between the fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy. Indeed, the conflict is between the Constitution and those who refuse to accept the discipline of the Constitution. Nowhere do the directive principles speak of nationalisation, and yet the Government have taken the stand that Article 31(c) is intended to nationalise industries. Nationalisation and distribution of material resources were antithetical to each other. There would be no equality with the exclusion of Article 14 and this would make possible open favours to members of the ruling party. The exclusion of

17. "Democratic Socialism," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XXIII, Nos. 40-42, 1959, p. 482.

18. Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*, New York: Collier Books, 1962, p. 211.

Article 19 would leave the citizens no freedom of speech and no right to dissent. Criticism of government's economic policy would land a person in prison, and he could protect his personal liberty under Article 21 no more on the ground that there was no procedure established by law. Property could be confiscated on pick and choose basis, in a manner different from the imposition of a capital levy which should apply to all. The operation of a free press can be brought under control by a law, made under Article 31(c) if newspapers criticise the government. There will be no relief with the exclusion of freedom of expression. All totalitarian attributes are embedded in black and white in Article 31(c). The economic system which is sought to be regulated to curb concentration of wealth, is an expression which can take on lawyers, doctors, architects or any other profession. It is ironic that absolute powers are acquired in the name of common man to serve him through socialism. Yet it is the common man who requires the fundamental rights utmost. The influential and the powerful do not require them so much.

More recent years have presented a disheartening picture. The threat arises from the fact that India has skipped over the centuries. The revolution of expectation has overtaken India before she could acquire the technology for satisfying the people's demands. A backlog of frustrated demands can be fatal for any form of government, but most so for democracy because it opens the door to the exact anti-thesis authoritarianism. Revolution leaves behind both a uniting tradition and a memory of successful revolts. Students participated more heavily than perhaps any other group in Indian struggle for freedom. Theirs' was the highest aspirations—theirs' also the deepest disappointments—and theirs' also the strongest and most emotive reactions. Education, youth and unemployment produce the explosive mixtures. The chances are that in India, if dictatorship comes, it will be of the left. Left radicalism appeals more to the science-worshipping youth. Few youngmen seek political activity in the ranks of the party in power. To defend the status quo is not heroic, especially when the evils like unemployment, poverty, crime, waste, inequality, and corruption exist round.

Whether urban educated youth goes Right or Left, it is not likely to be standard-bearer of liberal democracy. It is perhaps, the lower middle class in the cities, unskilled and semi-

educated, culturally conservative and confused, and politically adrift, whose politics is the most volatile. This floating population in the political arena makes it easier for opportunistic politicians to resign and reenter political parties, and to reshuffle political alliances with a staggering and confusing frequency. This may bring about rank dis-organisation and an authoritarianism of opportunism. Dictatorship appeals in the main to unorganised masses of men.

India is facing a dilemma, it is committed to democratic institutions, national unity and economic development. This tends to lead to the development of a kind of unprincipled authoritarianism where the ideals of a democratic pluralistic society operate, but where in reality Government is centralised, decisions are made by the relative few, and responsibility, except in the sense of kind of self-imposed responsibility, is weak and remote. Conceivably, the process of building strength through economic development contains some built-in authoritarian consequences. In the short run, economic growth can be politically unstabilising. At this point, it would be difficult to refute Roy that authoritarianism cannot evolve in India. The increase in material assets cannot proceed too far ahead of the maturing of human faculties, of the growth in people's power to understand and control the process through a strengthening of their mind, will and character. Roy makes a meaningful proposal that there has to be basic parity between material and moral advance, failing which the development of human qualities will be either overwhelmed through an excess of material accumulation or starved through its inordinate lack. In either case, the objective of human growth will be frustrated. The tensions arising from the pursuit of democracy and compulsions of backward economy are real, and are not likely to be eased for some decades. Overdevelopment of politics in an underdeveloped economy exposes India to the spectre of authoritarianism.

THE WAY OUT.

Roy's liberal ideas show the way out of the impasse. He forges a link between ethics and politics to satisfy the crying need of honesty and decency in Indian politics. Man can be moral by himself and he is capable of rational judgement. Ra-

tional moral behaviour of the individual lays the foundation of social morality. But Roy rejects transcendental rationalism, which is certainly anti-thetical to liberalism. Once God is let in, there is an end to the sovereignty of man. Therefore, the origin of reason must be traced in man's physical being as a biological property. Rationality is innate in man because he is but a fraction of the law-governed physical universe. Law-governedness being the common denominator, everything in the world happens according to a rational system. Good or evil are not simply given as elementary unanalysable qualities; they are emergent values. Rational laws are the result, and have the sanction of man's intelligent thinking. Only a rational human being can behave in a way so that his freedom is not attained at the expense of other people's freedom. If everyone is zealous about the freedom of others, a common idea of freedom is born and practised. That is the ideal, which Roy presents to banish the threat of authoritarianism in Indian politics.

This has far flung implications for India. The ideal of freedom is as old as mankind. But through the ages, it was conceived differently according to the intellectual atmosphere and cultural pattern of a given period. A new vision of freedom transcends the limitations of the established order, and it cannot be fitted into its cultural pattern. Then it becomes necessary to challenge its sanctions, be they religious or metaphysical. The spread of such a critical attitude towards traditional values, established forms of thought, venerable beliefs and blind faith is called philosophical revolution. Roy considers it necessary to herald a change in the mental attitude of Indian people. A change in the traditional mentality of India will work as firm basis for social revolution. Roy rules out any great change in political institutions, in legal system and economic organisation before India requiring such social revolution undergoes philosophical revolution. The searchlight of the spirit of enquiry and scientific mode of thinking are its requisites.

Roy rules out the Gandhian way in this direction, though he concedes that the Mahatma did have some humanist tendency and he was a moralist. But Gandhi was rather a humanitarian, treating man as the means for the operation of the purpose of God. This may be sublime view of life but it deprives man of freedom and sovereign creativeness. In this attitude

of surrender to a super-human will, one may find justification for having done what he would not do as a free agent. Roy's liberal political philosophy leaves no such convenient loopholes. It holds man responsible for his action and consequently offers greater guarantee against possible deviation from the chosen path of rectitude. It claims freedom, and deserves it by assuming responsibility. The principle of Gandhism—that man can serve the purpose of God—caused the failure of Mahatma's attempt to introduce morality to purify politics.

To get a glimpse into the ideal state of Gandhi, someone of the Gandhists will gather in his hands all the reign of power as the result of a complete hold on the people, who would then do whatever they are told to do. That might be a non-violent social order, although it will be based on emotional coercion. Roy describes the Gandhian social order as the terrestrial reflection of the teleological world order. Citizens will blindly follow their non-violent rulers, and it will, indeed, be a return to the legendary Ram Raj. Roy's findings are based on Gandhi's performance in Indian politics. The inadequacy of reforms enabled Gandhi to wrest the leadership of the nationalist movement from the Liberals, and to develop a mass national movement with a religious, culturally revivalist outlook. Roy ascribes the rise of Muslim League to "the defeat of Liberalism in Indian politics," which "led to the communal differentiation of the national movement, and ultimately to the partition of the country."¹⁹ Jinnah had grown up in the atmosphere of liberal nationalism. He became a fanatic communalist when under Gandhi's leadership, Indian nationalism put on the complexion of Hindu religious and cultural revivalism. In Roy's words, "Jinnah was Gandhi's anti-Christ."²⁰ It may be recalled that the basic factor that kept the liberals away from Gandhian Congress was Gandhi's intrusion of religion into politics. It made the liberals suspicious of the new prophet's political gospel, and they feared that any such use of religion would only accentuate fissiparous tendencies among the nationalists. To some extent, it can be maintained that the religious tinge in the politics of

19. "Democracy and Nationalism in Asia," *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVI, No. 29, 1952, p. 34.

20. *Ibid.*

Gandhian Congress contributed not a little to the rise and growth of Muslim communalism. If such a catastrophe is to be averted, India must be de-Gandhised. Roy is closer to the Liberal thinkers of Nineteenth Century India than Gandhi. He is uncompromisingly rational, and, therefore liberal, believing that even in a backward country like India, it should be possible to achieve ideas of self-government, individual liberty and a state ordered by reason. By reverting to the humanist tradition of liberalism, Roy turns the tide and gives new orientation to Indian democracy, which, at present is facing the fear of freedom, its greatest enemy.

Morality being the dictate of conscience, it can be practised only by individuals. Without moral men, there can be no moral society. One may find Platonism in Roy's liberal metamorphosis. His argument is mainly empirical, resting on the fact of evolution, but at crucial points it becomes Platonic. The first is that of 'universals'. That nature is law-governed means that universals are part of the constitution of nature. Universals are of the character of thought. They are rational entities; human rationality is duly ascribed to the fact that man is part of nature and so shares the rational character. The second Platonic doctrine is that the world of universal culminates in the good. The merely rational man may quite well be egoist, a hedonist or a tyrant. The argument from rational to moral follows only if one assumes the Platonic doctrine that the world of universals does contain a moral factor. By raising politics to a rational and ethical level, Roy combines in politics the spirit both of science and moral idealism. Thus, in a limited and specific sense, humanism may be regarded as an idealist philosophy though it rejects the existence of disembodied ideas and super-sensual categories. When turned away from Marxism, he no longer found a way forward; he sought a retreat into the rational liberalism of the pre-Marxist age.

REVOLUTION BY CONSENT.

Roy's social order rises with the support of enlightened public opinion as well as intelligent action of the people. Believing in social change, Roy concedes the right of the people to resist tyranny and oppression, but he rules out the use of

violent methods. Roy stands for "revolution by consent," and if force is the deciding factor, then "the dices are loaded against revolution."²¹ In a country like India, where the state may not have those advantages of the modern and highly organised states, the security of the established order is based on the blind faith and backwardness of the people. In the case of any attempt to overthrow the government by armed force, the vast bulk of population will be found not on the side of revolution, but rallying around the government, which for all they are told is something almost divine.

Roy's concept of revolution undergoes a change. It is no longer economic in content; it has a moral sanction. If revolution is to succeed, especially these days when the established reactionary states are so formidably powerful, it must cease to operate as a class movement. Its success is conditional upon the ability of its votaries to act as the personification of high ideals, cherished by humanity since the dawn of civilisation as the defenders of imperishable human values. That is the new way of revolution : revolution by persuasion.

Such a revolution opens up a perspective; it offers greater freedom. If human nature is not essentially bad, then, in a great social crisis, the perspective of revolutionary changes should have a stronger appeal for all but morally depraved. Roy believed that the human being is a thinking animal, and as such, revolutionaries have at least as much chance of winning over the atomised members of the dying social order as counter-revolutionaries. Only, they should have patience and perseverance, instead of being swayed by passions of revenge and hatred. The old ways of revolution lead only from defeat to defeat, and ultimately to the triumph of counter-revolution. The most red-hot revolutionaries no longer go to the barricades, but to the polling booths. The modern state is too powerful to be overthrown as at the time of the French revolution. The modern weapons and modern technique of military operations have rendered the old technique of revolution impossible.* That being so, if a radical reconstruction of society was still a historical necessity, there should be other methods of attaining the objective; a new way of revolution must be discovered. Of course, Roy does not rule

21. *New Orientation*, p. 55.

out the possibility of violent revolution by accident. Like the Russian Revolution, in India also, revolution might take place by accident. But it will be fluke of history, not to be relied upon like the stilts. Roy re-orientates the political practice to a long perspective, desiring revolutionaries to be intelligent as well as indomitable.

Roy was not prepared to believe that the ideal society had been established in Russia, and the rest of the world could do nothing but imitate it slavishly. That belief breeds the spirit of conservatism, which, in course of time, imperceptibly becomes reaction. By making a dogma out of these patterns, it would be obstructing revolutions which are still to take place. For Roy, iconoclasm is the fundamental spirit of revolution. But iconoclasts themselves often set up new icons. Since they are the highpriests of new temple, they do not want that their icons should be destroyed. But Roy is inclined to pull down the new icons, as it is only then, one follows their footsteps and act as revolutionaries. As revolutionary, he claims the right to tear down their icons just as they had to tear down older icons. That is the path of revolution which Roy suggests in quest of freedom. He considers it absurd to maintain that human genius cannot possibly create different types of social order. To say that the future of mankind must cast in one uniform pattern, is to set a rigid limit to human creativeness. It is necessary to re-examine theoretical postulates and pre-supposition from time to time in order to prevent running after wrong ideals, and to guarantee advance towards the goal of freedom.

As far as Roy is concerned, the ideal is neither communism nor social democracy; neither simple democracy nor again a classless society; it is freedom. He is quite aware that perfect freedom is never attained; ideals are never reached but they inspire incessant strivings towards them. Freedom is not an empty concept; nor is it a vague ideal. It is the choice for action. Greater the latitude of choice, nearer the freedom. Roy, therefore, cannot conceive of a nobler view of life than the old principle that man is the measure of everything. That social order is closer to freedom which allows the individual the largest measure of choice. The damaging behaviour of the communist parties in the anti-fascist war until the Soviet Union was attacked, discredited them seriously. The experience under fas-

cism created a general revulsion against the very idea of dictatorship of any kind. Democracy and liberalism got a new chance. The call for the return to the tradition of liberalism was a powerful reaction to the theory and practice of dictatorship. But for the active co-operation of the middleclass, cherishing the ideals of freedom and liberalism, there would have been no resistance movement. It is in response to their appeal to freedom that European humanity rallied in the fight against fascism. Without the tradition of liberalism, fascism could not be defeated. For Roy, communism had ceased to be ideal which could inspire man and guide his steps in the march towards freedom. Revolution will take place under a different flag. Every revolution in history ultimately establishes a new status quo, and human progress demands that every status quo must be subverted. Otherwise, history would come to a stop. Roy sees no reason to believe that it will be different with Russian Revolution. Communism in practice creates a new status quo under which the human individual has precious little freedom. Therefore, if freedom is the ideal of human life, one must look beyond communism. Revolution, that is, subversion of the status quo, and re-organisation of society on the basis of freedom and equality, remains a necessity. What is to be done concretely, is to replace the economic man by moral man by harmonising planned economy with individual freedom.

Explaining the revolutionary process, Roy does not think that objective conditions and historical necessity invariably contribute to the success of revolution. Fundamental changes in the structure of society take place only when there is a group of individuals who feel the necessity and also the possibility of fulfilling it. Only such people can develop an adequate amount of will to bring about the changes which are both necessary and possible. Revolutions fail as a rule; successful ones are exceptions to the rule. Roy treats human element as the basic factor in the revolution. This requires the leadership of those, who are intellectually high and morally great. Intelligence, integrity, moral excellence and wisdom should be the test of revolutionary leadership. The government, established through this revolutionary process, would ensure the conduct of public affairs in the hands of spiritually free individuals. What is suggested by Roy is not the ad hoc establishment of rule by intellectual elite,

but such an organisation of the democratic society as will give unlimited scope for the unfolding of the creative genius of man, and place executive power of the state under the control of free intellectuals, free from the influence of vested interests and also from the vagaries of the collective ego so much susceptible to demagogic appeals. They will represent none but their own conscience. Moral sanction, after all, is the greatest sanction. Values operate through the behaviour of individuals. Therefore, government composed of spiritually free individuals is the only possible guarantee for securing the greatest good of the greatest number. The free individual discharges social obligations not under any compulsion, nor as a homage to the exacting god of collective ego, but out of a moral conviction which grows from the consciousness of freedom. Party loyalty and patronage will no longer eclipse intellectual independence and moral integrity. That moral excellence alone can hold a community together without sacrificing the individual on the altar of collective ego, be it the nation or the class.

As Roy views it, one cannot be a revolutionary without possessing scientific knowledge. A revolutionary is one who has got the idea that the world can be remade, made better than it is today. The idea of improving upon the creation of God can never occur to the God-fearing. Mysticism is no philosophy for revolutionary political workers. Revolutionary politics must draw its inspiration from scientific philosophy. The world stands in need of a gigantic change. Science has given confidence to a growing number of human beings that they possess the power to remake the world. What Roy desires is not philosopher-king but philosopher-citizen. The measure of freedom actually enjoyed by individual men is the measure of freedom enjoyed by any society. Such an intellectual resurgence of the people will take place together with the resurrection of the individual from the grave of mass-man. Scanning the Indian scene, Roy comes up against the rock-bottom of political wisdom that education is the the essence and condition of revolution and reconstruction. Revolution by consent does not operate through the politics of power, but through the politics of freedom. Toleration is its basic principle to facilitate co-operation.

This democratic revolutionary process completes liberal metamorphosis of Roy. But it encounters several philosophical

hurdles. After all, man's freedom lies not in merely accepting change but in putting his own stamp on the process of change. But to be able to put his own stamp, he has to visualise the forms to which the change should lead. Utopianism is ingrained in man in so far as he is a free agent and creator. Between conception and actualisation, there is an inevitable distance. In art, the bridging of this distance may conceivably be within the power of the individual visionary. In social change, however, the construction of bridge is conditional upon many factors, the most important being the acceptance of the vision by other individuals, and their co-operation in the effort to actualise it. It is at this stage that Roy be warned, for if he claims omniscience for himself, and perfection for his ideals, then, indeed, utopianism becomes a means to social enslavement.

Roy's liberal metamorphosis leads to pure democracy as the ideal form of government. It has two unsatisfactory implications. In the first place, it implies approval of a society which can produce citizens with the time and skill necessary for conducting governmental business. This society must either be very primitive or have a very restricted leisure class as its only citizens. In the second place, the preference for more political participation, even where pure democracy is possible, may be founded upon the assumption that everyman known his own interest best, and, should participate in all decisions which affect them. This ethical assumption has two possible interpretations, neither of which is especially tenable. If it means that public policy should reflect the interest of the people, it only implies that the purpose of government is to satisfy everyone's desires. If on the contrary, the assumption means that the people would make good laws, they must be proved capable of governing. The most lucid defenders of the common man claims only that he understands issues within the range of his direct experience and issues raising fundamental questions of democratic rights and justice. It is pointless to argue that the people will become good citizens or morally responsible men through acting as their own legislators, unless their ability to legislate is first established. All human relationships are viewed in the light of value impregnated belief and notions, which determine, shape and explain them. Roy's is no exception.

These presumptions of Roy's liberalism in particular cases

may not be true. They posit conditions, especially moral conditions, that often do not exist. Pure open-mindedness, complete objectivity, and perfect rationality are instances of unworkable idealisation. They presume on the part of a government a fair recognition that it acts on consensus that is almost never complete, and that in acting on the will of a majority, it has still to keep a decent regard for the minorities it does not represent. It requires a set of constitutional institutions to support, and as far as possible to enforce this kind of political morality. And above all, it requires a community with a strong sense of its own solidarity and concern for the public interest, with a generally educated population, and probably with a degree of experience in working the required institutions.

The claims made by Roy on behalf of reason are larger than can be sustained in the final analysis. But it is no accident that all the leading variants of totalitarian tyranny in modern times have been associated with either a frontal attack on reason or attack from the flank. Privilege builds itself not on force alone, but on carefully nurtured illusions, which it must protect at all costs from the scrutiny of reason. The struggle against a privileged order works itself out not on the physical plane alone, but on the plane of ideas as well. And in every significant social revolution, the more democratic changes on the physical plane are preceded by a philosophical revolution in the course of which the ethical sanctions underlying the older order are subjected to rational analysis and their inadequacy expressed. In social life, most of the important controversies pertain to questions of means, and are capable of resolution if one has faith enough in reason, and patience enough to persist under its guidance.

It was one of the most remarkable achievements of Roy that he succeeded in retaining his faith in reason, though he had to face more than any other man, the heart-breaking hostility of organised irrationalism of Right as well of the Left. Born in a country where authoritarian tradition is strong, and in an age of militant nationalism, he rose superior to both; and he proclaimed his faith in a family of free human beings, worshipping no tribal gods, but loyal only to the universal principle of reason. Roy's ideas, while thus gaining in breath do not lose in dynamism. They are unacceptable to many, and may penetrate slowly.

When the ideas of the most contemporaries fade into slogans, Roy's thought may retain vigour and relevance. While Roy's political philosophy has no chance in India, many of its ideas are necessary to buttress individual liberty in a society which is in danger of losing it by a failure to comprehend the sources of its own present democratic purpose. It may be reasonable to conclude that if liberalism survives in India, Roy should be remembered periodically as its most disinterested champion. The tragedy of Roy is the tragedy of liberalism in Indian politics in spite of its correct perception of the dependence of a political order on appropriate values. By making reason ingredient to revolution, Roy shows correct path at a time when India is engaged in the gigantic task of economic reconstruction. The politics of socialism and the politics of amendments, though intended to bring about social change, may open the floodgates of totalitarianism if miscarried and subverted to party-ends. Liberal metamorphosis of Roy strikes a sagacious note against these danger spots in Indian politics.

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